PTI leaders declared POs F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Irked over the continuous absence of PTI leaders Murad Saeed, Hammad Azhar and former party leader Farrukh Habib, an anti-terrorism court in Islamabad on Monday declared them proclaimed offenders (POs) in the Judicial Complex attack cases. The court also issued arrest warrants for Wasiq Qayyum Abbasi, Raja Basharat, and others for failing to show up.

Frontier Post

In-camera meeting today F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly has announced stringent security measures ahead of the in-camera meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on National Security, scheduled to take place at the Parliament House on March 18 at 11:00 AM. According to the spokesperson, the National Assembly Secretariat confirmed that unauthorized individuals would be strictly barred from entry

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KP police

ASI martyred F.P. Report

Pakhtunkhwa Police have successfully repelled several miscreants attacks on police stations and checkposts in the province over

creants attacks were reported in Bannu, Karak, Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, and

The temporary hideouts

of miscreants in the moun-

tainous region between

Lakki Marwat, Karak, and

Mianwali were also

destroyed. In Peshawar,

hurled a hand grenade at

the Regi police station's

However, no casualties

were reported and a search

operation was launched to

track down the perpetra-

Meanwhile, in Lakki Marwat, militants targeted

the Gambila Police Station

from two directions, but the

(QRF) retaliated swiftly

forcing the attackers to

The exchange of fire lasted for about 15 minutes,

forcing the outlaws to flee

without causing any casual-ties, said Lakki Marwat

DPO Jawwad Ishaq. In

Khyber's Jamrud Bypass,

militants attacked a Bara

Rifles security checkpoint,

but security personnel repelled the assault. Two

security personnel sus-tained injuries in the fire-

fight, and a search opera-

tion was launched in the

Meanwhile, in counter-

terror operations, police

killed two terrorists in

Lakki Marwat and Karak

After being pushed back,

militants attacked Abbas

Khatak checkpost. In Tank,

police forces killed one ter-

rorist and injured several others in retaliation after an attack on the Nasran check-

post. In Karak, security forces eliminated militants commander Kashif Shakar

According to the Central Police Office, a brave and

dedicated ASI, Noor Salam, was martyred by a

sniper bullet during an

operation in Karak. Police

have intensified search

operations in affected areas

to apprehend the remaining

militants.

Terrorism

Response Force

attackers

checkpost.

PESHAWAR:

assaults.

unidentified

Malazai

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

No salary or pension hike planned in budget, NA told

ISALMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has made it crystal clear that there is no room for a salary or pension hike for the government employees in the upcoming budget.

In a written response to the National Assembly, the minister stated that pay scales and allowances won't be revamped through the hiring and ceiling limits are under review. Employees waiting for the raise will have to make do with the current

Meanwhile, the Finance Ministry laid bare the country's financial struggles, revealing that as of June 2023, external

Ministry reported a massive trade deficit While exports clocked in at \$136 billion, import shot up to \$291 billion, mainly due to economic growth and rising demands.

WB, Finance Ministry agree to continue collaboration: A key follow-up meeting was held here on Monday between the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, and his team at the Finance Division, with the World Bank (WB) team on Pakistan's national growth and fiscal program as part of the 10-year Country Partnership Framework (CPF) with a \$20 billion commitment, focusing on key development areas like health, education, climate resilience, and sustainable growth.

The meeting was attended by senior officers from the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). The primary focus of the meeting was a continued discussion on the World Bank's investment financing for economic reforms. The World Bank team presented tion of a comprehensive National Growth and Fiscal Program.

This program covers a wide range of economy.

critical subjects related to economic and fiscal reforms, including strategies aimed at unlocking constraints to inclusive and sustainable growth, mobilizing revenues improving expenditure quality, and enhancing efficiency and accountability in service delivery.

A major goal of these reforms is to create the necessary conditions for increased productive private investment while ensuring more public resources are allocated for inclusive development. Additionally, the World Bank briefed the Finance Minister on their ongoing data analysis of policy proposals and recommendations gathered from various chambers, trade bodies, and associations during the pre-budget consuldebts stood at a whopping \$126.141 bil-lion making up 43.03 per cent of GDP.

Adding fuel to the fire, the commerce

Adding fuel to the fuel to the fuel the fuel the fuel to the fuel th January this year to ensure a robust and of\$154 billion over the past five years. realistic revenue policy based on sound economic considerations.

During the meeting, Minister Aurangzeb emphasized the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to fiscal, trade, and private sector reforms that spans both the federal and provincial levels. He highlighted the importance of designing reforms that are incentivized through outcome-based and performancebased indicators directly linked to human development and socio-economic growth The Finance Minister reiterated that a nationally coordinated approach, as exemplified by the National Fiscal Pact, is cru cial to ensuring macroeconomic stability.

He stressed that this unified approach would be the cornerstone for achieving the country's aspirations for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, ensuring the well-being of all citizens. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to continued collaboration between the Ministry of Finance, the World Bank, and their ongoing work regarding the prepara- all relevant stakeholders, in order to advance the reform agenda and drive positive change for the future of Pakistan's



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Afiniti Information System led by CEO, Mr Jerome Kapelus called on

PM chairs review meeting on food security, agriculture

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday here held a review meeting of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research. Speaking during the meeting, he said agriculture was the backbone of the country's economy.

The government would provide all

facilities for the progress of agriculture sector and for increasing agricultural production, he said adding the services of young agriculture researchers from across the country would be hired for the progress of the agriculture sector. He directed that strict action should be initiated as soon as possible against the companies involved in the business of sub standard crop seeds.

He instructed that steps to increase edible oil production in Pakistan should be speeded up so that precious foreign exchange spent on edible oil import should be saved. He said research work in Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) should be expedited.

He further directed that farm mechanization should be promoted all over the country in collaboration loans to youth. with the provincial governments, private sector and other stakeholders. He said all matters related to dissovate sector and other stakeholders. Lution of Pakistan Agricultural

Pakistan's IT workforce capable of competing at global market F.P. Report

SLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that Pakistan's IT talented workforce has the capability to compete at the global market while all necessary facilities were being provided to IT companies to achieve the target of \$25 billion in exports. The prime minister xpressed these views during a meeting with a four-member delegation led by Jerome Kapelus, CEO of the renowned American multinational IT company, Afiniti that called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press elease. The prime minister welcomed Afiniti's interest in further investment n Pakistan's IT sector and suggested to Afiniti Pakistan to establish a worldclass call center in the country for national and international clients.

He further informed that he was personally overseeing programmes to equip the country's talented youth with IT, AI, and other advanced technical kills. Minister of State for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja and senior officials from the relevant institutions were also present during the meeting. The delegation appreciated the expertise of Pakistani IT professionals and their dedication to the sector's development. Jerome Kapelus said that Pakistan's IT sector was highly suitable for investment and business and currently, more than 1,000 highly skilled and capable Pakistani professionals were working at Afiniti Pakistan.

Steps should be taken to train youth Storage and Services Corporation regarding value-added products made from fruits and vegetables, he said adding measures should also be taken prepared for digitalization of supply for the provision of easy agriculture

(PASSCO) should be expedited. He expressed satisfaction at the strategy chain from farm to port to facilitate exports of agricultural products.

(Continued on Back Page)

Allocating £190m for a new Varsity

in questioned

F.P. Report

Senator and president human

rights cell of PPP Farhatullah

Babar has issued the follow-

another university in Islamabad with the 190 mil-

lion pounds that the British

government had seized from

a businessman and returned

to Pakistan is whimsical,

flawed, and strongly con-

The decision taken behind

closed doors without debate

at a time of domestic eco-

nomic volatility, rising debt

servicing, shrinking interna-

tional development aid,

changing donor priorities and Pakhtunkhwa and

Balochistan provinces burn-

ing the decision reeks of a

dictatorial mindset, further

distorting the already distort-

demned.

The decision to build yet

ing statement on Monday.

ISLAMABAD:

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur distributing gifts among children.

PM's remarks one-sided F.P. Report the United Nations, Pakistan always advocated construc and the Kashmiri people. The statement said oriented dialogue to resolve ISLAMABAD: Responding

Pakistan terms Indian

to media queries regarding the remarks made by the Indian Prime Minister dur-Fridman, Pakistan on misleading and one-sided.

Meanwhile, a kidnapping attempt on a Counter-Department (CTD) official was foiled by the public in Bannu on Monday. According to police, the incident took place in the Huweid Adda area, where armed men attempted to abduct CTD India's solemn assurances to

official Javed. However local residents intervened and thwarted the kidnapping attempt.
The assailants physically assaulted Javed, leaving him injured. They also managed to snatch his official pistol and mobile phone before fleeing the scene. The injured officer was shifted to the District Headquarters

Police thwarts terrorist

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Adviser Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif stated on Monday that the federal government should refrain from political rhetoric and instead cooperate in the

India's fictitious narrative all of victimhood cannot hide including the core dispute its involvement in fomenting a podcast with Lex ing terrorism on Pakistan's However, it said, peace and soil and the state-sanc-Monday said the remarks are tioned oppression in Indian remained hostage to India's Illegally Occupied Jammu rigid approach and hege-In a statement, the and Kashmir (IIOJK). It monic ambitions. Office Spok- said that instead of blaming esperson said they conve- others, India should reflect niently omit the Jammu and on its own record of orches-Kashmir dispute, which trating targeted assassinaremains unresolved for last tions, subversion and ter- impedes the prospects for

"Mutual cooperation and

Bilateral trade

investment will be encour-

food processing, and phar-

Zealand stood at about \$1.7

financial year.

tive engagement and resultoutstanding issues, of Jammu and Kashmir stability in South Asia have

It said, "The anti Pakistan narrative, emanat ing from India, vitiates the bilateral environment and seven decades despite rorism in foreign territories, peace and cooperation. It

It said Pakistan has must stop.' India, New Zealand agree to deepen ties

counterpart agreed on decided to start negotia-Monday to deepen their tions on a mutually benefisecurity and economic ties, cial Free Trade Agreement as the two countries announced the revival of Modi said. talks for a free trade agree-

New Zealand Prime aged in areas like dairy, Christopher Minister Luxon is on a five-day visit ma. We have given priority to India with the biggest- to mutual cooperation in ever delegation to accom- the areas of renewable pany a Kiwi premier on a energy and critical minerforeign trip, comprising als." Bilateral trade officials, and community between India and New and business leaders. Modi and Luxon met in New Delhi where they signed agreements on enhancing cooperation in defense,

we can boost the economies education and sports. of both our countries, pro-"We had detailed discusviding more jobs and highsions on various aspects of er incomes for Kiwis and our bilateral relations. We Indians," Luxon said in a have decided to strengthen statement. Indians are the and institutionalize our biggest source of skilled defense and security part- migrants, the third-largest nership," Modi said during ethnic group and the seca joint press briefing. Their ond-largest source of inter-defense ties will include national students in New joint exercises and training, Zealand. with plans for mutual coop-"I think you're seeing an eration in the sector's Indian government that's

industry, he added. been incredibly generous News. On Sunday, the two and very, very welcoming countries agreed to revive to New Zealand, and it free trade negotiations that speaks to the way that they have been stalled for over a also want to deepen this fact is that New Zealand decade, following talks relationship," Luxon said. and India are finding combetween New Zealand "We have brought the mon grounds to work on." Trade and Investment biggest delegation that's

NEW DELHI: Indian Minister Todd McClay and ever accompanied a Prime Prime Minister Narendra his Indian counterpart, Minister ... because we Modi and his New Zealand Piyush Goyal. "It has been actually want to make this as big as it possibly can be, because the size of the prize is immense. between the two countries,

"And actually, what's this all about? It's about actually cashback into Kiwis' pockets and we do that by growing our economy and expanding our trade opportunities." Zealand is an "important component" of India's Indo-Pacific policy, said

Dr. Udai Bhanu Singh, former senior researcher at the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses.

billion in the 2023-24 But strengthening ties "It is through trade that with the Pacific country is likely part of Delhi's ongoing efforts to broker trade deals with other nations after US President Donald Trump's decision to impose reciprocal tariffs on imported goods from countries, including India. "India is facing tremendous pressure from Trumpian policy of reciprocal tariffs and it would like to keep its options open as far as pos-Singh told Arab sible," "Even though this coming together may have precipitated been Trump's tariff assertion, the

ed public finance system in the country. What is the rationale of spending 70 billion rupees to build yet another university when the existing universities, facing a shortfall of 60 billion rupees, are facing internal turmoil due to nonpayment of salaries and pensions and some on the verge of closure?

The people of Pakistan still do not know the mystery behind the 190 million pounds transferred from the UK to Pakistan, the politics and political engineering behind it. The abrupt decision to build a university with this money has only compounded the mystery and raises many questions that need answers.

If at all the 190 million pounds legitimately belong the government of Pakistan, then it can be legitimately demanded that it be spent on education in all provinces, and not merely on building one university in Islamabad

Twenty-six million children in all provinces are out of school, and the existing public sector universities in the provinces are in financial crisis, resulting in frustration, discontent, strikes, and brain drain.

Trump says he and Putin will discuss power plants

WASHINGTON (Reuters): was likely referring to the tic? ... Are we going to drive US President Donald Trump Russian - occupied every Russian off of every said he would speak to Zaporizhzhia facility in Russia's Vladimir Putin on Ukraine, Europe's largest Tuesday about ending the nuclear plant. Russia and Ukraine war, with territorial Ukraine have accused each concessions by Kyiv and other of risking an accident control of the Zaporizhzhia at the plant with their nuclear power plant likely to actions. Kremlin spokesper-

the Washington area from The Kremlin said on Florida. "Maybe we can, Friday that Putin had sent maybe we can't, but I think we have a very good chance. "I'll be speaking to President work's been done over the weekend.'

ceasefire proposal that Ukraine accepted last week, as both sides continued trading heavy aerial strikes early western Russian region of Kursk. Asked what concessions were being considered tion to the war. in ceasefire negotiations,

feature prominently in the son Dmitry Peskov contalks. 'We want to see if we can would speak with Trump by bring that war to an end," phone but declined to com-Trump told reporters on Air ment on Trump's remarks Force One during a flight to about land and power plants.

Trump a message about his ceasefire plan via US envoy Steve Witkoff, who held Putin on Tuesday. A lot of work's been done over the "cautious optimism" that a negotiable and that Russia deal could be reached to end Trump is trying to win the three-year conflict. In Putin's support for a 30-day separate appearances on Sunday TV shows in the United States, Witkoff, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Trump's National on Monday and Russia Security Adviser, Mike moved closer to ejecting Waltz, emphasized there Ukrainian forces from their were still challenges to be months-old foothold in the worked out before Russia agrees to a ceasefire, much less a final peaceful resolu-

Asked on ABC whether Trump said: "We'll be talk- the US would accept a peace ing about land. We'll be talk- deal in which Russia was ing about power plants ... allowed to keep Ukrainian We're already talking about territory that it has seized, that, dividing up certain Waltz replied: "We have to lished on Monday that made ask ourselves, is it in our no reference to the ceasefire Trump gave no details but national interest? Is it realis- proposal.

inch of Ukrainian soil?" "We can talk about what is right or wrong but also have to talk about the reality of the situation on the ground," he said, adding that the alternative to finding compromises on land and other issues was "endless warfare" and ever World War Three. Ukraine's

Volodymyr Zelenskiy has said he sees a good chance to end the war after Kyiv accepted the US proposal for a 30-day interim ceasefire. However, Zelenskiy has consistently said the sovermust surrender the territory it has seized. Russia seized the Crimea peninsula in 2014 and now controls most of four eastern Ukrainian regions since it invaded the country in 2022.

Zelenskiy responded publicly Waltz's remarks. Russia will seek "ironclad" guarantees in any peace deal that NATO nations exclude Kyiv from membership and that Ukraine will remain neutral, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko told Russian media outlet Izvestia in remarks pub-

attacks: Saif F.P. Report

Hospital in Bannu for med-

ical treatment. Police have

launched an investigation

and searching for the sus-

war against terrorism.

In a statement, Saif said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police was bravely confronting terrorists, and in the last three days, the police had thwartmultiple terrorist attacks, adding that in Bannu and Lakki Marwat, the public stood shoulderto-shoulder with the police to repel terrorist assaults. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government pays tribute to the brave police and the proud public.



KARACHI: A large number of Muslims break their fast during Holy Month of Ramadan at sea view beach. —INP Photo

Security conference held to review law and order ahead of Eid

KARACHI (APP): A highlevel security meeting chaired by Director General Pakistan Rangers Sindh Major General Muhammad Shamraiz was held at the Rangers headquarters to assess Karachi's overall law and order situation.

The meeting focused on reviewing the special security plan for upcoming religious events, including Youm-e-Ali, the final days of Ramzan, Chand Raat, and Eid-ul-Fitr, said a news release on Monday.

Discussions were held on intensifying joint opera-tions by Rangers and police against habitual criminals in the city, with additional measures to strengthen security checks at Karachi's entry and exit points.

Authorities emphasized strict adherence to the provided directives in accordance with laws and regulations. The meeting also included a strategic review to ensure law and order and monitor elements involved in spreading hatred, illegal collection of Zakat, and

extremist activities. Key officials, including Sindh, Commissioner Karachi, Joint DG Intelligence Bureau, DIGPs, and senior officers from the police, Rangers. and intelligence agencies, participated in the meeting.

LDA seals another 87 properties

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Development Authority on Monday sealed another 87 properties during its on going operation on illegal commercial activities.

On the direction of Lahore Development Authority (LDA) Director General Tahir Farooq, LDA teams targeted different localities, including Gulberg, Faisal Town, Sabzazar, and the vicinity of UBD Canal Road.

As many as 35 properties were sealed in Gulberg and Faisal Town while another 18 on Canal Road. The teams also sealed 34 properties in Sabzazar during a recovery operation.

Sharjeel orders crackdown on excessive transport fares

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has ordered action against those charging excessive fares during Eid-ul-Fitr.

In an effort to provide relief to the public, the Sindh government has directed transport authorities to regulate fares, and a crackdown is underway against transporters imposing unauthorized fare hikes. have been issued to the

Sindh government is taking

additional financial bur-Strict action will be taken Accordingly, instructions the public. DIG Traffic and commis- porters arbitrarily over- excessive fares.

will be allowed to exploit

sioners to take immediate charging passengers will action against violators. charging passengers will face fines, legal action, and Sindh Senior Minister & possible closures. Transport provincial minister for owners must ensure com-Information, Transport and pliance with the fixed fares; Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam otherwise, legal action will Memon has stated that the be taken against them.

Senior Minister Sharjeel all possible measures to Inam Memon urged the protect the public from public to immediately file a complaint if any transporter dens during Eid-ul-Fitr. is charging excessive fares.

against those charging Department has directed excessive fares, and no one authorities to inspect bus stands and terminals across Sindh daily and take action He stated that trans- against those charging

Govt protecting rights and welfare of religious minorities: Sukhdev

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Spokesperson for Government of Sindh Sukhdev Hemnani stated that Sindh Government is sincerely committed to protecting and promoting rights and welfare of religious minorities.

formance, trations and 06 special port students from low- Hemnani.

facilitation desks at divi- income families. sional level to directly the province.

ing special measures to pro-religious vide financial assistance to province including in 192 Shedding light on gov- just past one year, more ernment's one year-per- than 21,000 benificiers formance, Sukhdev have recieved financial In addition, 98 develop-Hemnani said that Sindh support for various needs; ment schemes for religious Government has estab- more than 500 families pro- places have been complet-Additional IGPs of Special lished dedicated complaint vided with grant-in-aid for ed in past one year, while cells for minorities at dis- marriages: a dedicated trict level in police depart- scholarship programme for completed later this year," ment and district adminis- minorties launched to sup- highlighted

"Interfaith address complaints and committees have been issues of minorities across formed at district level across 8 districts, while He futher added that CCTV cameras have been Sindh Government is tak- installed in 253 sensitive sites religious monorities and in temples, 42 churches and

114 more schemes will be

PJA launches four training courses for judges

LAHORE (APP): The Justice Punjab Judicial Academy Ahmad (PJA) on Monday launched four training courses aimed at enhancing the profes-sional capabilities of judicial officers.

Three of these are twoweek performance evaluation training programs (2025) designed for civil judgescum-judicial magistrates, senior civil judges-cum-judicial magistrates, and additional sessions judges. The fourth is a six-day specialized training course on "Revenue Documents Analysis and Inheritance Issues" for judges of the district judiciary.

The inauguration cere-PJA Director General cal requirements of judi- inheritance issues.

Ahmad Naeem. Also in are well-equipped to dis-Ullah Program Mansoor Ahmad Khan, Director of Research Bushra Zaman, Director of Training Irum Ayaz, and Khalid, and Muhammad

Khalid Khan. Justice pants, Ahmad Naeem emphasized the impor- course was attended by tance of continuous profes- civil judges, senior civil sional development in the judges, and additional sesjudiciary. He stated that these training courses are the complexities of revmony was presided over by tailored to meet the practi- enue documents

(Retd.) Sardar cial officers, ensuring they attendance were Adviser pense justice efficiently and Director Admin Hafeez He further highlighted that Khan, Director a well-trained judiciary n Mansoor Ahmad plays a crucial role in strengthening public trust in the justice system.

PJA Director instructors General expressed hope Mahmood Azam, Ayesha that the specialized training on the judicial analysis of revenue documents would Addressing the partici- help judges in the smooth

(Retd.) administration of justice. The six-day training sions judges, focusing on

1,000 tractors to be given under Grow More Wheat Programme initiative

determined to promote agricultural mechanization in the province.

a high-level meeting held at over the next two years.

Agriculture House on Monday. The Farmers and service would be provided free of cost to farmers through a transparent balloting process. Meeting also finalized various welfare projects for the meeting, the Agriculture be launched as a pilot project in the Minister revealed that 57,733 applinext fiscal budget, he added. cations were received under the Grow More Wheat Programme, out declared eligible after verification.

more than 12.5 acres, he said and would be held under the supervision of the Punjab CM. The Minister fur- has allocated Rs 75 billion for the agricultural production targets

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Agriculture ther said that the Agriculture Minister Syed Ashiq Hussain Extension department has verified Kirmani said on Monday that Punjab wheat cultivation on 560,000 acres Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was under this programme. The Punjab government was committed to promote agricultural mechanization, He said this while presiding over allocating Rs 35 billion in financing

Farmers and service providers meeting reviewed the arrangements would receive interest-free agriculfor the upcoming event under the tural loans of up to Rs 50 million Chief Minister's Grow More Wheat through banks. He said that addition-Programme. He said 1,000 tractors ally, 1,000 high-tech machines would be provided through interest-free loans over the next two years, benefiting small-scale service providers. This programme would help increase farmers, to be included in the the production of wheat, rice, upcoming provincial budget. During orchards and maize crops and would

Speaking about the Kisan Card initiative, the Minister said that 539,000 of which 21,496 applicants were farmers had benefited from the first phase. In the second phase, farmers Tractors of 50-horsepower would owning up to 25 acres would be be allotted through a transparent included. Moreover, the per-acre loan draw to farmers cultivating wheat on limit under the Kisan Card would be increased to Rs 40,000 and processadded that the balloting ceremony ing fee would be reduced, he added.

second phase of the Kisan Card. This initiative would also facilitate the purchase of agricultural inputs including diesel. Under Phase 1 of the Green Tractor Programme, 9,000 farmers have already received tractors. In the next fiscal year, 9,500 tractors (ranging from 60 to 85 horse-power) would be distributed under Phase 2 of the programme.'

He further said that additionally under the Solarization of Agricultural Tube Wells Programme, 8,000 farmers had already received allocation letters through a digital balloting system and twelve service and supply companies were on-board for this initiative. Furthermore, 80% of the construction for four Model Agriculture Malls in Punjab had been completed.

Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani said that Punjab government was also considering constructing ten more Model Agriculture Malls in the next budget and added that 2,000 agricultural graduates would be recruited for internships in the upcoming fiscal year. Speaking at the meeting, Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahu emphasized that modern He said, "The Punjab government machinery was essential to achieve

National unity urged to combat terrorism

Home

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Climate Change, Dr. Shezra Mansab Ali Khan, on Monday emphasized the need for national unity and a multi-layered approach to combat the resurgence of terrorism in Pakistan.

Talking to a private news channel, she highlighted the importance of collective action by all political and military forces to ensure the country's security. She stressed that the National Security Committee's meeting is a significant step toward addressing the issue.

She advocated for open discussions in the National Assembly and the Senate to keep the public informed and strengthens democratic processes. Recalling past successes, she pointed out that collaborative efforts between the civilian government and military leadership under former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif played a crucial role in eradcating terrorism after 2014.

She urged all political parties, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI), to engage in unconditional dialogue to develop a comprehensive strategy against terrorism. Addressing concerns about external threats, Dr. Shezra condemned foreign interference, for anti-Pakistan activities.

She called for a unified national narrative to counter misinformation and defend the country's sovereignty. She also underlined the importance of reviving the National Action Plan and fostering cooperation between federal and provincial governments to ensure long-term peace and stability.

LHC seeks response from govt on

Reema's petition LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday sought a reply from the Punjab govern-ment on a petition filed by film star Reema Khan, challenging the non-formation of a tribunal to hear defamation claims.

A single bench, headed by Justice Abid Aziz Sheikh, conducted the initial hearing on the petition filed by the film star. Advocate Jehanzeb Sukhaira, representing Reema Khan, argued that the 2024 Defamation Law mandated the establishment of tribunals for defamation cases. However, no tribunal has been formed, leaving several cases, including Khan's, in limbo, he added.

He noted that before the new law, additional sessions judges and civil courts handled defamation cases, but under the current legislation, only a designated tribunal has jurisdiction.

He pleaded with the court to issue directions for immediate formation and activation of the defamation tribunals. At this stage, a provincial law officer assured the court that the tribunals would be set up after Eid. Following the arguments, the court issued a notice to the Punjab government and directed it to submit a response. The next hearing is scheduled for April 10.

MD SSWMB for completing cleanliness

arrangements
KARACHI (APP): The

Managing Director (MD) Solid Sindh Management Board (SSWMB), Tariq Ali Nizamani, Monday, directed to complete all necessary arrangements for ensuring cleanliness on the auspicious occasion of Youm-e-Âli.

He, while chairing a meeting with all relevant officers and private companies, instructed to complete the arrangements for cleaning the procession routes of Youm-e-Ali around the metropolis, keep all dustbins clean on the procession routes and deploy additional staff and machinery, said a statement issued here.

The MD also directed to set up complaint camps and ensure timely redressal of complaints received on 1128 and the SSWMB complaints app so that maximum relief could be provided to the public. He said that in connection with the Youm-e-Ali, 21st Ramazan ul mubarak, the arrangements for cleaning.

Sindh CM approves to abolish many TO, DEO, Director posts

Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah while presiding over a review meeting of school education emphasised the importance of foundational learning and early childhood care & edu-(ECCE) cation approved the decentralisation of financial and administrative powers to the school level for headmasters as well supported the dissolution of additional or duplicate posts for town officers, District Education the number of out-of-school Officers (DEOs), and directors stressed the importance of digitizing the education department.

This digitisation will involve monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes, such as tracking attendance for teachers and students using facial recognition technology. Moreover, there will be an effort to eliminate unnecessary administrative layers from the taluka to the divisional level.

A significant emphasis will be placed on technical education and skill development through initiatives like Middle Tech and Matric Tech, which will also incorporate STREAM Labs in both formal and non-formal sectors. The Chief Minister also highlighted the importance of public-private partnerships through the Sindh Education Fund (SEF) model and Education Management Organizations (EMOs), aiming to bridge the gap between primary and post-primary schools by enhancing existing schools and adding classrooms with

essential facilities. The meeting was attended by Education Minister Syed Sardar Shah, Chief Secretary Hyder Ombudsman Sindh Sohail Rajput, PSCM Agha Wasif, Chairman of the Planning and Development (P&D) Najam Shah, Secretary of School Education Zahid district for better unity of Abbasi, Secretary of Finance command and efficient

informed that there are 40,990 schools in the province, which include 36,300 primary schools, 2,600 elementary schools, 1,600 secondary schools, and 490 higher secondary schools. Current enrollment across all schools stands at 5.2 million, comprising approximately 3.09 million boys (59pc) and 2.12 million girls (41pc). The educa-

tion minister reported that

children is 7.8 million.

The CM set a target of bringing one million children to school during the next financial year. He expressed his satisfaction that the girls enrolment ration in the schools was encouraging. To a question, the CM learnt that the net enrolment rate for primary education is 67 per cent, and for secondary education, it is 22 per cent. He empha-

sised the need to address the

from primary to post-pri-

mary education by upgrad-

ing primary schools. To facilitate this transition, Murad Ali Shah approved initiating second shifts of elementary schools gap between primary and

post-primary education.
In consultation with the education department, the Chief Minister decided to abolish several positions of District Education Officers (DEOs) at the district level, including DEO SEMIS, DEO Academics, DEO Sports, and DEO Quality Assurance. The number of Taluka Education Officers (TEOs) will also be reduced; instead of four, there will be one TEO per taluka. Moreover, instead of having two DEOs (one for secondary and one for primary), there will be one DEO per

the divisional level, there will be one Director of School Education instead of two.

The CM has decided to transform existing high schools into model schools, establishing four model schools in each taluka to enhance the quality of education. By the 2025-26 academic year, approximately 150 schools will be developed as model institutions, with a total of 600 schools expected to be transformed by the end of the 2028-29 academic year.

The meeting decided to strengthen Management Committees (SMCs), enhancing training and community engagement and decentralising powers at the school level through a clustering policy. The goal is to increase the institutional capacity of teacher training institutes such as STEDA, PITE, DCAR, and others.

The school clustering challenges in transitioning policy will be implemented across the province. A total of 1,656 clusters of schools been identified. have District Education Officers (DEOs) and heads of Cluster Hub Schools will receive training. The chief within existing primary minister instructed the eduschools to help close the cation department to notify cation department to notify the Cluster Hub Schools along with their respective job descriptions. The target for the 2025-26 academic year is to have 1,150 clus-

ters with cost centers. The Chief Minister state ed that many schools lack essential facilities such as water, sanitation, washrooms, compound walls, and solar power.

He directed the education department to empower headmasters to access these facilities through a schoolspecific budget. approved upgrading 1600 primary schools to the secondary level, equipped with solar power and drinking



LAHORE: A worker busy in hanging vermicelli to dry after preparing it, as demand has increased during Eidul Fitr. —APP Photo

Commissioner reviews campaign against profiteering during Ramazan

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi on Monday chaired a meeting of deputy commissioners and senior officials of the Bureau of Supply to review the performance of administration's campaign against profiteering during Ramazan at his office on Monday. The meeting was attended among others by all deputy commissioners, additional commissioner Ghulam Mehdi Shah, assistant commissioner headquarters Rabia Syed, and senior officials of the Supply department.

The meeting reviewed the action taken against against profiteers and other strategic activities adopted to control the prices. Performance of commissioner counters established at super stores, camps installed at different markets and especially the arrangements of sale of food items at official prices in the supervision of officers/magistrates.

The meeting discussed the efforts to sell items at official prices under the supervision of officers in detail. It was decided that magistrates would spend maximum time at food stalls and shops to ensure the sale of items at official prices. Commissioner Naqvi emphasized the need for officials to spend maximum time checking prices in markets and bazaars to prevent complaints of overpricing. The meeting expressed satsfaction over efforts to curb profiteering, and the commissioner praised the officials for their efforts, stressing the need to improve them further.

STATION SUPPLY DEPOT PESHAWAR CANTONMENT **TENDER NOTICE**

1. Station Supply Depot Army Service Corps, Peshawar Cantonment invites sealed quotations from all government contractors for provision of materials for development/upgradation of this depot out of budget allotment for FY2024/2025.

2. Quotations will be deposited in envelopes named as "COSSDPeshawar Cantt" 3. Ail quotations/ bids will be submitted latest by 07Apr 2025 at 10:00 hours and will be opened in the presence of all bidders on 07Apr2025 at10:30 hours in

Commanding Officer, SSD Peshawar office. 4. The Commanding Officer, Station Supply Depot Peshawar Cantonment reserves the right to reject any bidders. eshawar Cantonment, reserves the

quotations/ bids at any time by assigning plausible reasons to the 5. Listof goods and other related information may be obtained from Station Supply Depot, Peshawar Cantonment during working hours

> **Admin Officer SSD Peshawar Cantt** Cell No: 03343335567 - 03335297685

Action against encroachments in Peshawar Cantt Seven trucks of goods seized, 21 individuals booked



F.P. Report

Cantonment Board ner, conducted a large-scale officers, joint operation against illeencroachments in Shah Alam, Peshawar Cantt. The opera- Commissioner tion took place at various Additional Saddar, Chowk Fawara, Bazaar, Liaqat Bazaar, Shafi Market, and Gora Bazaar.

was carried out effectively the Assistant Commissioner Superintendent Raja Yasir. Assistant Assistant key locations, including Commissioner Cantt, and Additional Commissioner Furthermore, Cantonment

To ensure the operation Chaudhry Babar Hussain deployed a Vigilance and The and in an organized man- Enforcement Squad con-Deputy sisting of 100 personnel, keep public spaces free of Peshawar and the District Commissioner of Peshawar equipped with heavy Administration Peshawar assigned a team of senior machinery, under the lead- improve the business envi-

> During the operation, Matani, comprehensive security Peshawar reaffirmed their arrangements were made to commitment to continue maintain law and order, such operations in the Assistant Fifty police personnel were future to keep public spaces deployed to ensure the free from encroachments smooth execution of the and ensure a more organ-Officer operation.

personally supervised the security measures and instructed the concerned SHOs to ensure effective communication with the enforcement teams.

Peshawar City

As a result of the operation, the Cantonment Board Peshawar seized seven trucks of goods, and 21 individuals were booked at the West Police Station The enforcement teams cleared the illegally occupied areas, restoring public pathways and maintaining order in the markets. The anti-encroachment

campaign received positive feedback from local traders, who appreciated the authorities' efforts to encroachments including ership of Enforcement ronment. The District Administration Cantonment Board

ized urban environment.



Trodher Iemphasizes merit and transparency in sndustrial sector

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special ery. Assistant to the Chief Minister Pakhtunkhwa Department of Industries every aspect. to ensure strict adherence

ly fulfill its duties while on Monday.

He stated that the entire of Khyber system of the department for should be based on trans-Industries, Abdul Karim parency, ensuring maxi-Tordher has directed the mum ease for the public in

He made these remarks to merit and transparency while presiding over a in all professional respon-review meeting on the department's performance He emphasized that the at the committee room of department must efficient- the Industries Department

Director of the Small implementation progress Industries Development Board, Habibullah Arif, Additional Secretary for ed the officials to further Industries, Rehan Gul accelerate the depart-Khattak, Deputy Secretary ment's responsibilities and Aftab Khan, officials from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa areas. Board of Investment &

Industries & Commerce. During the meeting, a developmental initiati comprehensive review of within the department.

maintaining the highest The meeting was the department's various standards of service delivatended by Managing sectors, set targets, and presented. was Special Assistant instructservices across multiple

He was also informed Trade and officers from on proposed measures to the Directorate General of enhance transparency, good governance, and developmental initiatives

SBBWU hosts dialogue on role of universities in promotion education

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Shaheed University Peshawar host- play in Pakistan's developed an open house dialogue ment, despite facing limited promoting education under emphasized the need for the patronage of think tank, universities to showcase for Knowledge and Review faculty members to emerge (FIKR), a flagship project as public scholars, under-of Pakistan Development taking productive research Foundation (PDF).

prominent speakers, includ- institutions. ing Member Shariah Appellate Bench Supreme vide a platform for stu-Court of Pakistan, Justice dents, faculty, and stake-Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Vice holders to discuss the sig-Chancellor SBBWU, Prof. nificance of universities in Dr. Safia Ahmed, Chairman promoting education and PDF, Muhammad Bilal development in Pakistan. and Director Students Affairs SBBWU, sized the overlooking of the

Inuit, their contributions and for oundation (PDF). and engaging in public The event featured forums to promote their

The event aimed to pro-

The dialogue empha-Prof. Dr. Farhat Humayun, role of Pakistani universi-

that powerful circles and heard. They should partici-The dialogue highlighted those at the helm of affairs pate in public forums and Benazir Bhutto Women the crucial role universities claim that universities are present the case for univernot playing any role, while Pakistani on the role of universities in resources. The discussion despite their lack of a major problem for univerresources, are serving the sities, but despite this, they nation in an unparalleled are continuing to serve the

> as a result of wrong political decisions, which is an injustice to universities. Dr. Qibla said that if universipublic scholars. Faculty edged. should increase the trend of productive research and gain public opinion through

their expertise. When faculty have pub- good.

faculty and students of the ties. Participants regretted lic opinion, they will be sities. VC Safia Ahmed said universities, that the lack of resources is people. She said that the universities are most important people for a being blamed harms caused university are its students, faculty, and staff.

Chairman Muhammad Bilal Sethi said that universities and faculty ties and faculty want to have not been able to presprove their worth and con- ent their case with strength vince people about their which is why their services role, they must emerge as are not being acknowl-The purpose of the think

tank, FIKR is to provide a platform to the people to highlight their services and

Country records lowest electricity production in 5 Years: Muzzammil

the Chief minister Khyber economic improvement. current fiscal year. Mr. Aslam stated that

lowest electricity produc- experienced a negative

F.P. Report tion in February 2025 growth of since February 2020, January alone.

PESHAWAR: Advisor to post-COVID-19. He warned the Chief minister Khyber Moreover, the country's newly introduced gas tarprediction of 3.1% pakhtunkhwa Muzzammil large-scale manufacturing iff for captive power units growth for 2024-25. Aslam, has expressed (LSM) sector has seen a may lead to a further However, he expressed concerns over the federal decline of 1.8% in the decline in the coming doubts about achieving government's claims of first seven months of the

Aslam further empha-Pakistan has recorded its sized that the LSM sector competitiveness.

Mr. Aslam concluded agriculture.

of 1.2% in that the economy is on the He warned that the despite the government's

months, reflecting a even 1% growth in the decrease in demand, purnext fiscal year due to chasing power, and export negative growth in largescale manufacturing and

UOP appoints Muhammmad Nauman as Media Officer

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: University of Peshawar has assigned additional responsibilities Professor Assistant Muhammad Noman Khan of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication as the Media Officer.



According to a notifica- assigned the additional Registrar (Establishment), Officer to additional responsibilities Communication. as Media Officer.

the University Act, has duties as Media Officer.

tion issued by the Deputy responsibilities of Media Assistant Professor Ali Professor Muhammad Imran Bangash of the Noman Khan of the Muhammad Journalism Department Department of Journalism has been relieved of his and Mass

Media Officer. It is worth noting that The Vice-Chancellor, Muhammad Noman Khan exercising powers under has previously performed

Paramedics reject appointment of doctor in key faculty Position Health Sciences, Khyber under any circumstances. existing irregularities.

Naseerullah Khan Babar rejected this decision Memorial Hospital, Asif

He criticized the governthe ment for breaking its they would launch a Health Ahtesham Khan Paramedical Association at promises and completely province-wide protest.

Asif Akhunzada assured Akhunzada, has strongly the Provincial Paramedical opposed the appointment Association of Khyber of a doctor as the Balbanda a doctor as the Pakhtunkhwa that the faculty of nepotism and including protests, a ntroller of Examination rights and protection of the gross incompetence, stat- strike, and a complete Controller of Examination rights and protection of the in the Faculty of paramedical community Paramedical and Allied would not be compromised

He warned that if their demands were not met, ation urged Advisor to

calling it an injustice.

ing that such appointments

The paramedical associand Secretary Health to He further criticized the reconsider their decision. government's decision, Akhunzada warned that failure to do so could He accused the medical result in severe backlash, boycott of services across were attempts to cover up the province.

ASJ convicts murderer for life imprisonment

Corruption, drugs within prisons

wouldn't be tolerated, warns DIG

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Additional Session Judge Peshawar Arif Shah has moving car near the sentenced a man to life Motorway Toll Plaza. imprisonment for murderminor altercation.

F.P. Report

Deputy

General

Muhammad

PESHAWAR:

Inspector

Saĥibzada

advocate argued that on Chamkani Police Station. April 7, 2017, the accused, Shah Faisal, fired at the vic-nesses testified against the

The victim was shot in ing another person over a the neck and later succumbed to his injuries. The The counsel for com- police registered a case that the accused did not imprisonment sentence to

During the trial, 13 wit- a minor issue. (ASJ) tim, Shakir Zain, from his accused, and the evidence claimed that the prosecution presented confirmed that had failed to prove its case Shah Faisal had indeed and that the witnesses' statefired at Shakir Zain over a ments were contradictory trivial matter.

plainant Khalid Anwar against Shah Faisal at the deserve any leniency, hav- Shah Faisal for murder.

ing taken a human life over

In contrast, the defense Nevertheless, the court ulti-The prosecution argued mately handed down a life

Ramazan: A blessed month offering golden opportunity to quit smoking

PESHAWAR (APP): As quit smoking or using other also weigh in on the danmillions of Muslims across addictive substances. observe Ramazan, the holy month blessed month to adopt of fasting, it is not just a healthier lifestyles, leaving time for spiritual reflection, behind cigarettes, naswar, prayer, and self-discipline and even narcotic sub-

but also a perfect opportu- stances. nity to break free from harmful habits such as and narcotic use.

on self-restraint, patience become a beacon for many seeking to rid themselves of life-threatening addic-tions including heroine, hashish, cigarettes and

individuals naswar, and other substances.

According to Prof Dr Malik Riaz, a medical speled to significant dental cialist at Government problems, including the Hospital Pabbi Nowshera, the long hours of fasting aid in detoxifying the body, managed to overcome his making it easier for individuals to quit harmful his determination and spir-

'When the body goes break free from their addictions," said Dr. Riaz.

and snuff during the day, combined with the powerspiritual purity, helps to that affected his social gradually diminish crav- image. ings. The holistic approach benefits those looking to

As such, many use this For people grappling

with addiction, Ramazan smoking, naswar addiction, also sees an increase in participation in counseling This sacred month, and support groups. These renowned for its emphasis programs, which help individuals quit smoking or and mindfulness, has naswar, often gain more traction during the holy month. Zeeshan Khan, a 32-

year-old resident of Nowshera district, is one of and oral cancers. the many who have suc-Medical professionals cessfully quit naswar durhave highlighted how fast- ing Ramazan. He recounting during Ramazan plays ed how he had been addicta pivotal role in helping ed to naswar since 2010, conquer initially using it as a way to dependence on nicotine, cope with the stress of his MA exams. Despite numerous attempts to quit over the years, his addiction had problems, including the loss of a tooth. This Ramazan, however, he addiction with the help of itual commitment.

"I have already lost a without food and water for tooth due to continuous use extended periods, it begins of naswar, and I am a process of detoxification relieved that I have quit that can help individuals this harmful habit," said Zeeshan. He expressed his regret over the negative The absence of smoking impact of naswar on his personal and professional particularly life, ful motivation to maintain unpleasant habit of spitting

Zeeshan's story highof Ramazan, focusing on lights the physical, emo-both physical and mental tional, and social conse-well-being, significantly quences of this addiction. Dental professionals

gers of naswar and declared that Ramazan was most ideal month to quit smoking.

Dr. Tahir Khan, a senior dental surgeon, noted that the extensive damage to Zeeshan's tooth required its extraction, as a root canal was not a viable option.

He emphasized that naswar's harmful effects extend far beyond oral health, leading to issues such as gum infections, jaw complications, and in some severe cases, even facial disfigurement. It also raises the risk of heart disease

According to Dr. Tahir Khan, the link between naswar use and oral cancers is particularly alarming. Pakistan has one of the highest incidences of lip and oral cavity cancers, with around 11,000 new cases reported every year in men, making it the most common cancer type in the country

The root causes, he said, include poor dental hygiene, tobacco use, viral infections, and, in some cases, the use of harmful substances like naswar and cigarettes.

Naswar remains preva-Pakhtunkhwa, where approximately 70 percent of the population uses it without fully understanding the severe health consequences. This smokeless tobacco, often made from fresh tobacco leaves and various chemicals, contributes to a host of health problems, including cancers, respiratory issues, and

cardiovascular diseases. the demand for naswar, mass media campaigns.

like Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, and remains high, with exports reaching neighboring provinces like Punjab and

Sindh. The economic impact of naswar is significant as well, with an estimated market value of around Rs

6 billion annually. Dr. Muhammad Naeem, a former chairman of the Economics Department at the University of Peshawar, suggested that naswar should be brought under the tax net, similar to cigarettes, to curb its usage and increase awareness of its

health risks. In 2022, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government attempted to levy taxes on naswar, raising the tax to Rs 5 per kg, but this decision was later reversed due public Nevertheless, the move highlighted the growing concern over the harmful impact of naswar on public health.

To tackle the rising addiction to drugs and naswar, the government has established 12 detoxification and rehabilitation

centers across the province. These centers aim to Khyber help individuals struggling with addiction, offering treatment and support for those looking to break free from harmful habits.

Additionally, under the "Drugs Free Peshawar" program, naswar addicts are also being rehabilitated.

Syed Imran Director of the Social Department, Welfare stressed the importance of raising awareness about the Despite these dangers, dangers of naswar through

mismanagement in prisons drugs and ice and said that care of the prisoners, started meeting the prisonwill not be tolerated under the use of drugs inside the ensure cleanliness on a ers on a daily basis after any circumstances. After taking charge, he under any circumstances, high-quality food to the jails in the Peshawar visited various jails and after which he himself went prisoners. after listening to the problems of the prisoners, he issued orders on the spot. Peshawar Regional DIG Prisons Sahibzad Muhammad Qaiser visited various jails and reviewed the administrative affairs, other facilities and food and

prisoners. Continuing his visits, he made surprise visits to District Jail Charsadda and District Jail Jamrud yesterday, where the deployed officials started running, after which he listened to the problems of the prison-

cleanliness provided to the

of the prisoners.

Along with the cleanli-

ers, and personally went to the jail kitchen and and got information about checked the quality of the not tolerate any negligence the food and other facilities food prepared for the prisoners.

Qaiser said that Drugs, ice ness of the jails, he strictly issued instructions to the DIG Prisons Sahibzad and corruption and other implemented the use of jail administration to take Muhammad Qaiser has jail will not be tolerated daily basis and provide starting his visits to various

He said that he would or corruption on the part of the jail officials during their During his visit, he duty. It may be recalled that





In brief

Meeting on law and order held F.P. Report

KOHAT: In view of the

deteriorating law and order situation in the District, an important high level meeting was held with Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah in the chair at his office on Monday. The meeting beside others was also attended by Provincial Agriculture Minister Major® Muhammad Barakwal, Chairman DDAC Karak Khurshid Khattak MPA, Mayor Tehsil Banda Shah Inayat Khattak, DIG Kohat Abbas Majeed Marwat, Deputy Commissioner Karak Shakeel Ahmed Jan, DPO Karak and leaders of the Khattak Ittehad. The meeting reviewed in detail the various aspects of the law and order of Karak and certain important decisions were taken in

Commissioner Kohat Division directed the law enforcement agencies to use all resources to maintain the law and order in the Karak and sternly dealt with those who disturbing the peace. The elected leadership of Karak District declared that Karak is the most peaceful district of the province and no one will be allowed to destroy the ideal peace of the Karak They assured their allout support to the divisional as well as district administration in this

Young man shot killed F.P. Report

LARKANA: Unknown gunmen shot and killed 30-year-old youth, Mudassar Manthar Jagirani, on the charge of alleged mischief in Sachi Bakhsh Jagirani. in the jurisdiction of Kanga police station. On the spot the mother of the killed person said that unknown armed men have killed my son under the accusation of iving a relationship with a Jakhra caste woman's affairs. Protest dokri against Cholistan canals hled: In the city of Dukri of district Larkana, against not setting the new price of wheat and drawing 6 canals over the Indus River, political and organizations social United Party, Sindh Sindhi Adabi Sangat, Taluka Bar Association, SABHA, Youth Social Union took out a protest rally from Ali Park in front of the press club. On this occasion Yasir Mangi, Advocate Altaf Khokhar, Irshad Baghio and others said that by taking out 6 canals from the Indus River, it is an attempt to damage the historical status of Sindh and the lakes, lush fields and ecosystems of the Indus Valley, which will not be tolerated in any way. Including farmers, settlers, workers, writers,

Man kills daughter F.P. Report

BUREWALA: In the name of so-called honour, a man in Burewala on Monday shot dead his daughter and severely injured his niece for buying a pizza. An uncle of the victims who was later identified as Zubair said that the incident occurred when the infuriated father accused both girls of trying to elope, and later opened firing on them. further uncle revealed that both girls were gone outside of their home to buy pizza from an outlet. Soon after receiving the report, local police reached the crime scene and shifted the dead and injured girls to local hospital. Police after registering a case started investigation. Honour killing is a practice wherein family members, primarily women, are punished often fatally, for perceived transgressions against societal or familial expectations.

BISP to overcome gender based poverty

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Pakistan Peoand Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support all segments of society. She emphasized that the BISP is providing financial assis- and the helpless, ensuring and to tarnish the character tance and welfare to the their fundamental rights. underprivileged, widows, and destitute women without any discrimination.

She expressed these views while addressing a joining ceremony organ-ized by PPP Mardan Naseem Akhtar, under the chairmanship of Divisional President Nawabzada Umar Faroog Khan Hoti. On this occasion, Naseem them. Akhtar, along with hunofficially announced her inclusion in the PPP.

She reiterated that the PPP cer in administrative matple's Party (PPP) Women's is the true representative ters, besides being associat-Wing Provincial President party of women and is com- ed with teaching and learnmitted to their progress ing. All equipment for the through various programs Benazir Bhutto Children's Program (BISP), Rubina and initiatives. She high- Hospital has been pur-Khalid, stated that the PPP lighted that the Benazir chased transparently under is a representative party for Income Support Program is prevailing laws and in this a historic achievement of the PPP government, which has been made to spread a landmark initiative of the has provided a vital safety rumors by giving a false PPP government, aimed at net for widows, the poor, impression of corruption

tions made regarding financial irregularities at Mardan hospital which is available Medical Complex and in the hospital and the hosperazir Bhutto Children's pital is fully functional Hospital is baseless and Division at the residence of there is no truth in these being provided to the renowned social worker reports. All the allegations patients. made by the hospital on behalf of Karnal Dr. Gulzar of Rs. 37.9 million to the made by the hospital on are all fabricated and base- personal account of the projless. There is no truth in

dreds of her supporters, is an honest and dutiful been filed in court against officer and his services are the said person for baseless no less than a blessing to allegations, defamation of As the chief guest, the institution. His identity the institution and character Rubina Khalid welcomed has been targeted for assassination of the project the new female members unknown reasons, which is director.

into the party by presenting very unfortunate. Dr. them with PPP mufflers. Amjad Ali is an expert offiprocess a sinister attempt of the project director, Alleged embezzlement which is based on sheer in health sector: The allega- malice. Quality equipment has been purchased for the

ect director is ridiculous, fabricated and baseless. A Dr. Professor Amjad Ali defamation suit has already

where medical facilities are

UoB inks MoU with Human development Commission

F.P. Report

BUNER: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the University of Buner (UoB) and the ty due to the deteriorating Human (NCHD), on Monday.

Dr. Saiful Islam, Vice judiciary against it. Chancellor and Expressing serious con-Muhammad Saud, Deputy cern over the role of Director NCHD Buner Establishing a collaborative framework between the partnership specifically focuses on the "Each One Teach One (EOTO)" initiative, which engages university students in the promotion of literacy and educa-

Furthermore, both sides will seek joint cooperation to improve access and quality of education in the Advocate. region, says a press release issued by the M&PO UoB.

Bannu Bar Association and

lawyer forums of all political parties rejected the clo-Pashtunkhwa National Commission for law and order situation and Development announced to hold a peaceful protest movement and The MOU was signed by file a writ in the higher Tehreek-e-Insaf,

> Commissioner Bannu and Deputy Commissioner Asghar Bannu in the current situation, a joint meeting of Mandan and other senior presidents, general secre- advocates were present. taries of all political parties, bar association officials and senior advocates was held under the chairmanship of Bannu General Secretary, promi-nent nationalist leader closed the main roads of Shoaib Khan Saduzai

demned closure of roads: of People's Lawyer Forum, children and women are Malik Aurangzeb Khan facing severe difficulties

Advocate Miranshah Road and other Advocate, Provincial General Secretary of Juma Khan Forum, Asghar Ali Khan Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Malik Haroon Party Advocate, Ahmed Ali Siddiqui Advocate of Inamullah Shah Advocate

of Mulgri Lawyers, Mureed Khan Advocate, Malik Nisar Khan Mandan, Malik Asghar Nawaz Khan, Aamir Khan Advocate Briefing the media after the joint meeting, Advocate Shoaib Khan Saduzai said that the divisional and dis-Bar Association trict administration of Bannu for all types of traffic in the name of security, The meeting was attend- which is not only affecting ed by Malik Noorzada millions of people on a Bar Association con- Khan Ahmed Zai Advocate daily basis, but also school

23 laptops distributed among students

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Under education-friendly Vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, laptops were distributed among 23 talented students of District Toba Tek Singh. These laptops were given to students who secured prominent positions STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) competitions.

The laptop distribution ceremony was held at Government Girls High School No. 1 Toba Tek Singh.In which MPA PP-121 Chaudhry Amjad Ali Javid, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Toba Tek Singh Zeeshan Labbha Masih, Chief Executive Officer District Education performance. Authority Toba Tek Singh Ageela Intikhab Khan and itate public: Chairperson Ramazan.

Shahid Khushnood along Punjab with many educational offiauthority cers, teachers, parents and students participated.

Addressing the ceremony, MPA Chaudhry Amjad Singh. Ali Javid appreciated the Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih said that the Punjab government

provide modern educational facilities to the youth. the Punjab government and Punjab thankeď Chief

Sahulat bazaars to facil-

given to the principals, head-

Sahulat Bazars authority, MNA Muhammad Afzal Khokhar visited Sahulat stalls in Model Bazar at Toba Tek

He inspected sale of sugar hard work of the students and flour on subsidized price and congratulated them. and questioned the pur-Additional Deputy chasers about the availability of both commodities and about the attitude of the staff deputed for sale of both is taking all possible steps to items. He also examined cleanliness, complaint cell cilities to the youth. functioning and the camp Parents and teachers established for senior citiappreciated this initiative of zens.He reviewed the home delivery system in the Sahulat Bazar and took feed Minister Maryam Nawaz back from the customers Sharif. In the End of the cerabout the provision of good emony, certificates were also quality commodities. He told reporters that chief minmasters and headmistresses ister Maryam Nawaz Sharif who showed outstanding was giving top priority to the provision of relief to the people in Holy month of

Advocate Shazia Mir to contest Bar election

District



F.P. Report

PABBI: Advocate Shazia Mir Aftab, a distinguished lawyer at Peshawar High Court, is set to make history by becoming the first female lawyer to contest the Pabbi Bar Association elections. A member of a reputable family in Pabbi, Shazia will be running for the executive member post.

With the support of the majority of Pabbi Bar's lawyers, Shazia's chances of winning are looking promising. She is contesting the election on the platform of the Malgari Wakilan, a subgroup of the Awami National Party.

Shazia has been a vocal advocate for human rights and social justice, making her a well-respected figure in the community. As the only female lawyer in Pabbi, her participation in the elections is a significant milestone.

The annual elections of the Pabbi Bar Association are scheduled to take place on April 5, 2025. Shazia's campaign is gaining momentum, with the support of Malgari Wakilan non-partisan lawyers, lawyers from Pabbi Bar, and People's Lawyers Forum. Her dedication to social and human rights issues has earned her widespread recognition, making her a strong contender for the executive member posi-

Petrol pump salesman killed

Syed Waliullah Shah

separate incidents, one person was killed and another injured. Police have registered separate cases and initiated investigations in this regard, on Monday.

In the first incident, unknown individuals shot and killed a petrol pump employee in Khweshgi area of Nowshera. The culprits fled the scene.

Mohammad Sadiq, son of Noor Shah Khan, a resident of Jhanda Khel Khweshgi, filed a report with the police stating that his brother, Mohammad Arif Wahaab, son of Latif Khan, was working as a salesperson at the petrol pump. He left for work after Iftar and was later found dead in the pump's room.

In the second incident, a man was injured in the Rashakai Nowshera.

Zulfiqar, son of Islam Gul, a resident of Usmanabad, filed a report with the police stating that he was shot and injured by Paienda Khan, son of Ahmad Shah, a resident of Usmanabad, who fired at him with the intention of killing him.

JI calls for equal care for orphaned children



F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami district chief and former MNA Maulana Asadullah has said that is is the responsibility of an Islamic welfare state to ensure orphaned children receive the same care, love, and opportunities as any other child in society.

He made these remarks during a speech at an Iftar dinner organized by the Aghosh Al-Khidmat Gulabad Center, an orphanage. The event, held in observance of Khidmat Foundation, orphans residing at the center, and community elders.

meaningfully to society.

In line with this, ADC Bashir Khan

The Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Bashir Khan, was the chief guest for the occasion. The Al-Khidmat Foundation central leader Fazal Mehmood, ADC Bashir Khan, Aghosh Gulabad in-charge Saeedullah, JI tehsil chief Maulana Javed Iqbal and others.

The speakers emphasized that the care and well-being of orphaned children must be a priority for society as a whole. Orphans, they pointed out, are especially vulnerable due to the loss of parental support and guidance. In a welfare state, every effort should be made to ensure that these children are provided with not only basic needs like food and shelter but also emotional support, education, and access to healthcare, just as any other child would receive in a loving family environment.

Maulana Asadullah stressed that Islam places great significance on the welfare of orphaned children, urging society to treat them with compassion and responsibility. 'Orphaned children should not be viewed our collective care and attention," he said. government agencies, NGOs, and the future.

broader community to create a support system that nurtures these children and gives them a chance for a bright future.

Speakers further highlighted the role of organizations like the Al-Khidmat Foundation, which has been at the forefront of providing welfare services to marginalized groups, especially orphans. The foundation's ongoing efforts in securing a better future for these children include offering them quality education, access to healthcare, and psychological counseling, World Orphan Day, was attended by JI all aimed at helping them grow into welllocal leaders, volunteers from the Al- rounded individuals who can contribute

> announced a donation of 50,000 rupees from the district administration for the Aghosh Al-Khidmat Gulabad Center. The donation is part of the district administration's continuous support for the care of orphaned children in the region. Additionally, community leaders gathered at the center to break their fast with the orphans, offering not just financial support but also emotional encouragement.

> Saeedullah, the center's in-charge, mentioned that the Aghosh Al-Khidmat Gulabad Center organizes this special event every year on the 15th of Ramadan to raise awareness about the importance of supporting orphaned children. This occasion, which is intended to be both a spiritual and communal gathering, encourages the community to become actively involved in the care and protection of orphans.

The event concluded with a shared commitment to expanding the scope of care for orphaned children, ensuring they as a burden but as individuals who deserve are integrated into a loving and supportive environment, and advocating for He called for coordinated efforts between their rights to a fulfilling and prosperous

Jirga holds meeting in Torkham

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: resume the Torkham border for general crossing, the Pakistan and Afghanistan jirga members hold a meeting on Monday, at zero point in the Afghan side of Torkham, postponed previously owing to miscommu-

nication. The 36 members of jirga comprising tribal elders, ullemas, traders and representatives of Clearing Agent

Association, Torkham and Khyber Chambers of Commerce and Industry led by Tehsil Chairman Shah Khalid crossed the border to Afghanistan.

jirga at the crossing where Afghan custom to initiate added. the meeting.

Pakistan jirga head Tehsil Chairman Shah Khalid after attending the moot and returning back said that previously the Afghan jirga had been informed of three Terms of Reference (TOR) i.e. to hold cease fire at the bor-

traffic movement. The Afghan jirga agreed area.

The Afghan business on ceasefire and recomcommunity members, eld- mencement of the border ers and border officials but on halting building of received the representative post at prohibited sought a day time to convince its from they were taken to respective government, he

> Shah Khalid maintained that the jirga was held in a friendly atmosphere and hopefully an affirmative message will be received from the Afghan government.

It is to be mentioned here that the Torkham border has remained suspendder, stop construction work ed for the last 24 days due at post in disputed site and to quarrel, erupted between resume the border for Pak-Afghan border forces pedestrian as well as for on construction of a post by the Afghanis in a prohibited

One killed in road accident

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD (INP): A Bhattian man killed while two others of Tandlianwala police station.

said that a speeding car hit not assess the tractor trol-

a tractor trolley from opposite direction near Katho Stop of tractor trolley were Headquarters

As a result, Amir(40) r/o on Chak No.435-GB died on Tandlianwala canal road on the spot whereas Rescue sustained serious injuries in late Sunday night. The acci- 1122 shifted Irfan(35) and a road accident in the area dent occurred as head lights Abdul Aziz(25) to Tehsil reportedly not on due to Hospital Tandlianwala for Rescue 1122 spokesman which the car driver could treatment. Further investigation was underway.

Media playing critical role in public awareness

F.P. Report

population management agenda cate, and influence public perprogress and development. This can mobilize action and help was the central theme of the address the challenges posed by National Media Coalition an expanding population," he Meeting on Harnessing Media stated. for Positive Social Change, Ikra organized by the Population Council with the support of UNFPA. Journalists from leadaction.

Ali Mir, Senior Director, presence offers a unique oppor-Population Council, stressed the tunity to advocate for evidenceurgency of tackling Pakistan's based policymaking, raise rapid population growth, which awareness about population threatens economic stability, growth, and promote family resource distribution, and the planning initiatives," he noted. country's ability to meet its development goals. He high- Director lighted the increasing strain on Population Council, led a ses-

care, education, and employ- ing the population agenda emphasized. in Pakistan, particularly in ception, ultimately driving poli-

Ikram ul Ahad, Deputy Communication, Manager Population Council, spoke about the global impact of media in ing media outlets across shaping social change. "Media Pakistan participated, emphasiz- has played a transformative role ing the media's power to shape worldwide by influencing policy public discourse, and policy discourse, challenging misconceptions, and amplifying critical In his welcome remarks, Dr. issues. In Pakistan, its dynamic Ali Mazhar Choudhary,

Communication,

ment, underscoring the need for through media. Coalition mem-QUETTA: The media has a vital collective action. "The media bers worked on a strategic plan Ghulam Farid Khan, Programme role to play in advancing the has the power to inform, edu- to advance the narrative of sustainable population growth, the coalition's efforts in equipidentifying key focus areas for ping media professionals with addressing the challenges posed cies that promote sustainable media coverage. These included the tools to hold policymakers nology, but due to high inflation by rapid population growth—a population growth. By shedding the links between rapid populamajor hurdle to national light on key issues, journalists tion growth and climate change, pivotal role in fostering transwomen's empowerment, female education, the integration of exposing gaps in service delivpopulation welfare indicators in ery, resource allocation, and polthe NFC Award, political will, icy execution. Through respon-the role of Lady Health Workers sible journalism, we can advo-(LHWs) in family planning, and cate for solutions to Pakistan's incorporating family planning pressing population challenges services into social protection networks.

Ikram Junaidi, Senior Reporter at Daily Dawn, shared nalists face in reporting population-related issues and provided recommendations for overcoming them. "Journalists must navpolitical sensitivities, yet their role in spotlighting critical social issues remains indispensable. Consistent and well-researched reporting can drive public school children due to insuffi- rate. awareness and policy action on cient educational budget, lack of public services such as health- sion on effectively mainstream- population challenges,"

Analyst at UNFPA, commended parency and accountability by and contribute to a more sustainable future," he concluded.

Education a hope for hopeless people: The United Nations insights on the challenges jour- recognizes education as a fundamental human right for every child. Moreover, Article 25-A of the Constitution also guarantees the right to free and compulsory igate editorial priorities and education for children between

the ages of five and sixteen. Unfortunately, Balochistan -Pakistan's poverty-hit province, has a high percentage of out-ofhe facilities, poverty, and gender System' is a non-profit entity, to reduce the drop-out rate.

In fact, education has always been a cornerstone of human development. Its significance has grown exponentially in this modern era of science and tech- nate children from the underrates and a lack of facilities; children, particularly in rural areas, are still deprived of their basic right to education.

tution called 'Hope Schooling is around 30,000, while the num-System' has recently been established in the Walma area on the outskirts of the Zhob district in the northern part of Balochistan. More than half of the children getting education here are orphans or those whose hand-t0mouth parents are unable to

afford the educational expenses. Abdullah Sherani, the principal of 'Hope Schooling System', says when orphans, destitute, and poor children are not provided free education, it results in the deprivation of their fundamental right, and an increase in the already alarming drop-out

but it is aimed at promoting free education in a far-off region of Balochistan. The school owner terms the institution a ray of hope for the poor and unfortuprivileged community, where lack of education often makes the children vulnerable to child labor.

"The number of private educa-Luckily, an educational institutions in Balochistan ber in the Zhob valley is about 100. If each educational institute enrolls only 40 children free of charge, 120K children deprived of education will be able to get education across Balochistan," he suggests, adding "the high dropout rate is in Balochistan with over 3 million out-of-school children," he laments.

It is worth mentioning that a school enrollment campaign is underway across Balochistan that aims at raising awareness among the parents to get their children enrolled and persuade the teachers to ensure their presence at government-run schools. He says the 'Hope Schooling The campaign is also expected

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

15 detained after North Macedonia nightclub fire kills 59

Macedonia killed at least before spreading rapidly.

59 people, officials have Video verified by the said. The blaze broke out at BBC shows people trying the Pulse club in Kocani, to extinguish the flames on duo in the country.

band survived and was leaving. Reports suggest being treated in hospital, a the fact there was only a spokesman for the public single entry and exit point prosecutors office told the to the improvised nightclub BBC's Newshour. In total, caused 155 were injured at the con-Pance Toskovski said the crush at the club as people detainees will be ques- rushed for the exits. She tioned, adding that there are recalled falling to the "grounds for suspicion that ground and being trampled there is bribery and corrup- during the chaos before tion" linked to the fire.

miles) east of the capital, there are many dead." Skopje, has been described as an "improvised night- year-old sister - who her club" in the local press, family had previously been having previously been a searching for - had died, carpet warehouse. Ms saying: "I was saved and Arsovska said there had she wasn't." Red Cross volbeen only "one efficient unteer Mustafa Saidov said exit" in the building, as the most of those affected were venue's back door was young people aged 18 to locked and could not be

tions had also showed sev- 18. "The situation is brutal, eral "abnormalities" in the chaotic, the stories are very venue. "There are deficien- sad, and unfortunately cies in the system for fire- many young lives are lost, extinguishing and the sys- Mr Saidov added. tem for lightning," she said.

Citing initial reports, specialist in reconstructive Toskovski said the fire had been started by sparks from University Clinic for pyrotechnic devices that Surgical Diseases in the had hit the ceiling, which capital, told the BBC most was made of highly flam- of the patients being treated mable material. Footage at his hospital arrived with shows the band - which extensive burns. "[They formed in 2002 and has have] second and third be able to withstand the topped the North degree burns in the head, level of injuries they have

NORTH MACEDONIA past decade - playing on said. Kocani's hospital (BBC): Police have stage when two flares go director earlier said that detained 15 people after a off, after which sparks staff had initially been fire at an nightclub in North catch fire on the ceiling struggling to identify

where about 500 people the ceiling. The footage had gathered for a concert shows the club was still full by DNK, a popular hip-hop and some people appeared Only one member of the put out the fire rather than many "young lives". caused panic. Marija Taseva, 20, told Channel 5 Marija Interior Minister TV she was caught in a managing to get out. "I He said that the venue don't know how, but somedid not have a legal licence how I managed to get out," to operate. The venue, in a she told the Reuters news town around 100km (60 agency. "I'm fine now, but

She added that her 25-20. Officials say more than 20 of the injured and three The first on-site inspec- of those killed were under

and plastic surgery at the Macedonian charts over the neck and upper torso," he at this moment".

patients due to a lack of ID cards. Eighteen patients were assessed as being in a critical condition. Prime Hristijan Minister

Mickoski called it a "difficult and very sad day" for to be watching efforts to the country, which had lost The government has declared seven days of

national mourning, and the government is holding an emergency session as part of ongoing investigations on how the incident unfolded. North Macedonia's President, Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, said she was shocked "as a mother, as a person, as a bereaved directly, she added: "Your immense pain is mine too." "No business or activity can function without standards and rules," she wrote in a statement. "Let us not allow anyone to endanger the lives of innocent people again." Siljanovska-Davkova added that the most seriously injured were being taken to received treatment in specialist clinics in Bulgaria, Greece. and Turkey. European leaders have voiced their condolences. European Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen say ing the EU "stands in soli-darity with the people of North Macedonia in this difficult Neighbouring President Aleksandar Vucio called it "a tragedy of immense magnitude" adding that fears remain as "many more people will not be able to withstand the

Trump moves to close down Voice of America

US President Donald commitment to a free and their federal grants had Trump has signed an order independent press". It been terminated. VOA and to strip back federally fund- added: "If an entire news- other ed news organisation Voice room can be sidelined USAGM say they serve of America, accusing it of overnight, what does that more than 400 million lisbeing "anti-Trump" and say about the state of press "radical". A White House freedom? "An entire instistatement said the order tution is being dismantled would "ensure taxpayers piece by piece. This isn't are no longer on the hook just a staffing decision - it's for radical propaganda", a fundamental shift that and included quotes from endangers the future of politicians and right-wing independent journalism at media criticising the broad-

radio service, was set up Global Media (USAGM), during World War Two to which also funds non-profit counter Nazi propaganda. It entities such as Radio Free says it currently reaches Europe and Radio Free hundreds of millions of Asia, which were originally people globally each week. set up to counter commu-Mike Abramowitz, VOA's nism. director, said he and virtually his entire staff of 1,300 people had been put on paid the minimum presence and

order left VOA unable to partner, said that VOA carry out its "vital mis- employees were notified in sion... especially critical an email by Crystal today, when America's Thomas, the USAGM adversaries, like Iran, human resources director. China, and Russia, are sink- A source told CBS that all ing billions of dollars into freelance workers and creating false narratives to international contractors leading representative obtained by CBS notified staunch loyalist Kari Lake group for US journalists, the bosses of Radio Free to be a special adviser for said the order "undermines Asia and Radio Free the USAGM.

(BBC): America's long-standing Europe/Radio Liberty that VOA." The president's order targets VOA's parent VOA, still primarily a company US Agency for

It tells managers to "reduce performance... to function required by law". Abramowitz said that the CBS, the BBC's US news

stations under teners. They are broadly equivalent to the BBC World Service, which is part-funded by the British government. The Czech Republic's Minister, Jan Lipavský said he hoped the European Union could help keep Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty running in Prague. He said he would ask European foreign ministers

at a meeting on Monday to find ways to at least partially maintain the broadcaster's operations. Elon Musk the billionaire and top adviser to Trump who has been overseeing sweeping cuts to the US government has used his social media platform X to call for VOA to be shut down. The US president also cut funding to several other federal agencies - including those responsible for preventing homelessness, and funding museums and libraries. Trump was highly critical discredit the United States". were told there was now no of VOA in his first term. He The National Press Club, a money to pay them. Emails has recently appointed representative obtained by CBS notified staunch loyalist Kari Lake

Peace deal must bar Ukraine from Nato, Russian official says

MOSCOW (BBC): Russia end." "We will be talking frontline in the east will seek guarantees that about land. We will be talk-Nato will exclude Ukraine ing about power plants," from membership and that Trump said when asked Ukraine will remain neutral about concessions. Trump in any peace deal, a added that he was already Russian deputy foreign discussing "dividing up minister said. "We will certain assets" between demand that ironclad secu- Russia and Ukraine. The rity guarantees become part US and Ukraine have earlier declined to answer a agreement," Alexander Grushko told ceasefire to Russia. media outlet Russian

should be the neutral status conditions for achieving of Ukraine, the refusal of peace. One of the areas of Nato countries to accept it contention is Russia's westinto the alliance," he said. It ern Kursk region, where comes as US President Ukraine launched a mili-Donald Trump has said he tary incursion last August will speak to his Russian and captured some territocounterpart Vladimir Putin, ry. Putin has claimed as talks continue over a Russia is fully back in conpossible ceasefire in the trol of Kursk, and said tion. Less than a month three-year war in Ukraine.

Speaking on Air Force weekend. We want to see if ceasefire could be moni- starting negotiations on we can bring that war to an tored and policed along the ending the war.

agreed to propose a 30-day

While Putin said that he supported a ceasefire, he "Part of these guarantees also set out a list of tough

Ukraine's Meanwhile, Volodymyr President Zelensky has accused Putin of trying to "sabotage" diplomatic efforts to secure an immediate ceasefire. US envoy Steve Witkoff, who met with Putin in Moscow, question on how Russianoccupied land in Ukraine could be addressed in a potential deal, during an with CNN interview Russia currently controls around a fifth of Ukraine. During his election campaign, Trump repeatedly promised to end the war which began with Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbour in 2022, on "day one" of a new administra-Ukrainian troops there after he was inaugurated "have been isolated". He Trump had call with Putin One Trump said: "A lot of has also raised numerous that reportedly spanned 90 work's been done over the questions about how a minutes about immediately

Trump and Putin to hold call on truce deal soon: US

International

WASHINGTON (BBC): US President Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin will speak in coming days, as talks continue over a possible ceasefire in the three-year war in Ukraine. US envoy Steve Witkoff, who met with Putin in Moscow, told CNN that he expected that "there will be a call with both presidents

this week". "We're also continuing to engage and have conversation with the Ukrainians," he added. "We're advising them on everything we're thinking about." Last week, the US and Ukraine agreed to propose a 30-day ceasefire to Russia. While Putin said that he supported a ceasefire, he also set out a list of conditions for achieving peace. Witkoff said in the interview: "I president". Addressing the think the two presidents are going to have a really good and positive discussion this week." He also said that teams of US negotiators would meet counterparts from both Ukraine and Russia during the coming week. Witkoff added that he believed a deal would be reached "in [the] coming weeks". "I am really hopeful we are going to see some progress here," he said. During his election campaign, Trump repeatedly promised to end the war, which began with Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbour in 2022, on "day one" of a new administration. Less than a month after he was inaugurated, Trump had call with Putin that reportedly spanned 90 minutes about immediately starting negotiations on ending the war. Witkoff declined to answer a question on how Russian-occupied land in Ukraine could be addressed in a potential deal. Russia currently controls around a fifth of Ukraine. The envoy said Trump was actively participating in the diplomatic back-and-forth. As an example, Witkoff said that "within five to 10 minutes" of his meeting with Putin concluding, he had returned to the US embassy to brief Trump, as well as Vice-President JD Vance, White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles and National Security Adviser Mike Waltz. "So the president is getting updates in real time

every important decision here," he said. Pope seen for the first time since going to hospital

on everything that's hap-

pening and he's involved in

VATICAN CITY (BBC): The Vatican has released the first image of Pope Francis since he was admitted to hospital a month ago. The photo shows the pontiff sitting in a wheelchair in front of an altar at a chapel in Rome's Gemelli Hospital, where he has been recovering from pneumonia.

Earlier, in his written Angelus message, the Pope said he faced a "period of trial" as he thanked wellwishers for their prayers, and prayed for peace in "countries wounded by war". It marked in a row that the Pope was not present in person for his weekly blessing. The Vatican said earlier this week that an X-ray had confirmed "improvements" in his condition, but that he still needed hospital treatment. The Holy Father still requires hospital medical therapy, motor and respiratory physiotherapy," it said in a statement, adding that they were "showing further, gradual improvements'

Pope Francis, 88, has not been seen in public since his admission to hospital on 14 February, no photographs had been released. "I join with so many brothers and sisters who are sick: fragile, at this time, like me," the Pope said in his latest statement, released earlier in the day. "Let us continue to pray for peace, especially in the countries wounded by war: tormented Ukraine, Palestine, Israel, Myanmar, Lebanon, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.' Since his arrival in Rome's Gemelli Hospital, the Pope has been treated for double pneumonia and other infections.

Nearly 42,000 UK asylum seekers waiting on appeal

asylum seekers are waiting for an appeal hearing after the Home Office rejected their initial claims, according to analysis of official figures. The Refugee Council said the number is a five-fold increase in two years and the government risks simply moving the asylum crisis from one part of the system to another, with almost 40,000 migrants still housed in hotels.

The Home Office said it had doubled the number of asylum seekers receiving an initial decision on their claim and allocated funding for more sitting court days. A spokesperson said the government remains determined to end the use of asylum hotels over time and cut the "unacceptably high" costs of accommodation.

The Refugee Council said more asylum seekers' claims are being refused due to legislation introduced by the previous Conservative government, which made it harder to prove genuine refugee status. After the government enacted the Nationality and almost all Afghans asking for sanctuary were granted asylum.

Many of those rejected are thought



Enver Solomon, has called for better and fairer decision making.

"Right first-time decision making years." will ensure refugees are given safety to go on to contribute to communities across the country and those who don't have a right to stay in the UK second half of last year. Previously, out that those in the appeals backlog still require accommodation and

boats in the last two years. The chief urgent action to restart asylum proexecutive of the Refugee Council, cessing and clear the backlog of cases, which will save the taxpayer an estimated £4 billion over the next two

It is allocating funding for "thousands more sitting days in the Immigration and Asylum Chamber to streamline asylum claims and improve productivity," the statement Borders Act, only four in 10 Afghans are removed with dignity and improve productivity," the statement were given permission to stay in the respect," he said. The charity points added. Statistics from the Ministry of Justice show that at the end of 2024 there were 41,987 asylum appeals in warns that, without improvements, the court's backlog, up from 7,173 at the potential cost of hotels could be the start of 2023. The Refugee likely to be appealing the decision. £1.5bn this year. A government Council's analysis suggests the total Currently, Afghans make up the high-spokesperson said: "The asylum sys-number of asylum application est nationality accommodated in tem we inherited was not fit for purappeals lodged last year was a 71% hotels and those arriving by small pose, which is why we are taking increase on 2023.

US deports hundreds of Venezuelans despite court order

NEW YORK (BBC): More planes. White House press Judge Boasberg gave a verthan 200 Venezuelans secretary Karoline Leavitt alleged by the White House denied the court ruling had to be gang members have been violated. "The adminbeen deported from the US istration did not 'refuse to to a supermax prison in El comply with a court order," Salvador, even as a US blocked removals. El Salvadoran issued after terrorist TdA President Nayib Bukele [Tren de Aragua] aliens had wrote on social media that 238 members of the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua had arrived in the that he had signed a procla-Central American country, mation invoking the Alien along with 23 members of Enemies Act of 1798 as he along with 23 members of the international MS-13

identified the detainees, nor against the territory of the provided details of their United States". He said alleged criminality or gang membership. A federal membership. A federal be deported for engaging in judge's order prevented the Trump administration from the US. The Alien Enemies flights had already depart- civilians. ed. "Oopsie... Too late," posted Bukele on social judge's ruling.

A video attached to one Trump's by armed officials from the tees had already taken off, ernment agencies are organised crime.

she said. "The order, which the had no lawful basis, was already been removed from US territory." US President Donald Trump announced accused Tren de Aragua of ang. "perpetrating, attempting, Neither the US governant description and threatening an invasion ment nor El Salvador has of predatory incursion

invoking a centuries-old Act was last used during wartime law to justify some World War Two to intern of the deportations, but the Japanese-American US District Judge James Boasberg in Washington

members of the gang would

bal order for the flights to turn back, US media reported, although that directive did not form part of his written ruling. The written notice appeared in the case docket the Reuters news agency reports, although it is unclear when the flights carrying the alleged gang members departed from the US. In a court filing, Department of Justice lawyers said the order had not applied because the deportees "had already been removed from United States territory".

A senior administration official told CBS News, the BBC's US partner, that 261 people were deported, 137 of whom were removed under the Alien Enemies Act over alleged gang ties. The justice department has appealed against the judge's El Salvador's notorious ruling. The American Civil mega-jail, the Terrorism Liberties Union, which was Confinement involved in the lawsuit (Cecot). The El Salvadoran against the Trump adminis- president said they would media, referring to the DC ordered a 14-day halt to tration, said the court's be held there "for a period deportations covered by order may have been violat- of one year", and that could proclamation, ed. The case raises constitu- be of his posts shows lines of pending further legal argu-people with their hands and ments. After lawyers told under the US system of of Bukele's effort to crack feet shackled being escorted him that planes with depor- checks and balances, gov- down on the country's

expected to comply with a federal judge's ruling. Venezuela criticised Trump invoking the Alien Enemies Act, saying it "unjustly criminalises migration" and "evokes the darkest episodes in the history of humanity, from slavery to the horror of the Nazi concentration camps".

Rights groups con-demned Trump, accusing him of using a 227-year-old

law to circumvent due process. International USA wrote on X that the deportations were "yet another example of the Trump administration's racist targeting" of Venezuelans "based on sweeping claims of gang affiliation". Bukele, a Trump ally, wrote that the detainees were immediately transferred to

US vows to keep hitting Houthis until shipping attacks stop

end attacks on shipping, the US defense secretary said, signaled it could escalate in strikes the day before.

Houthi-run health ministry said killed at least 53 people, are the biggest US mil-Middle East since took office in January. One said in a televised speech.

The Houthi movement's crime,"

(Reuters): The United against the US aircraft car-States will keep attacking rier USS Harry S. Truman against the US aircraft car-Yemen's Houthis until they in the Red Sea. US warplanes shot down 11 Houthi drones, none of which as the Iran-aligned group came close to the Truman, a US official told Reuters. response to deadly US US forces also tracked a missile that splashed down The airstrikes, which the off the coast of Yemen and was not deemed a threat, the official said.

US Defense Secretary tary operation in the Pete Hegseth told Fox News: "The minute the President Donald Trump Houthis say we'll stop shooting at your ships, we'll US official told Reuters the stop shooting at your campaign might continue drones. This campaign will for weeks. Houthi leader end, but until then it will be Abdul Malik al-Houthi unrelenting." "This is about said that his militants stopping the shooting at would target US ships in assets ... in that critical the Red Sea as long as the waterway, to reopen free-US continues its attacks on dom of navigation, which is Yemen. "If they continue a core national interest of their aggression, we will the United States, and Iran continue the escalation," he has been enabling the Houthis for far too long,' he said. "They better back political bureau described off." The Houthis, who the attacks as a "war have taken control of most while Moscow of Yemen over the past urged Washington to cease the strikes. The Houthis' would resume attacks on would resume attacks on

began in late 2023, saying they were acting in solidarwith Gaza's Palestinians.

Trump also told Iran, the Houthis main backer, to stop supporting the group immediately. He said if Iran threatened the United States, "America will hold you fully accountable and, we won't be nice about it!" response, Hossein Salami, the top commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, said the Houthis made their own decisions. "We warn our enemies that Iran will respond decisively and destructively if they carry out their threats," he told state media. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for "utmost restraint and a cessation of all military activimilitary spokesman said Israeli ships passing situation in the country," without evidence in a tele-through the Red Sea if his spokesperson said in a vised statement early Israel did not lift a block on statement. US Secretary of eral members of the Houthi Monday that the group had aid entering Gaza. They State Marco Rubio told leadership.

WASHINGTON/ADEN launched a second attack had launched scores of CBS News' "Face the attacks on shipping after Nation" program: "There's Israel's war with Hamas no way the ... Houthis would have the ability to do this kind of thing unless they had support from Iran. And so this was a message to Iran: don't keep supporting them, because then you will also be responsible for what they are doing in attacking Navy ships and attacking global shipping."

Russian Minister Sergei Lavrov called Rubio to urge an "immediate cessation of the use of force and the importance for all sides to engage political dialogue, Moscow said. Five children and two women were among the 53 people killed in the US strikes, said Anees Alsbahi, spokesperson for the Houthi-run health ministry. Another 98 people were injured, the ministry ties" in Yemen and warned Pentagon did not immedinew escalation could "fuel ately respond to a request cycles of retaliation that for comment about the may further destabilize claims of civilian casual-Yemen and the region, and ties. Reuters could not pose grave risks to the independently verify the already dire humanitarian claims. Residents in Sanaa said the strikes hit a neighborhood known to host sev-

US tornadoes, wildfires and dust storms leave 40 dead and 'staggering' damage

TEXAS (BBC): At least 40 Texas and Kansas whipped up dust storms that resulted in vehicle pile-ups and a dozen deaths.

The extreme weather, people have died after torna- covering an area of the coundoes ripped through a try that is home to more than swathe of the US Midwest 100 million people, fanned and South. Missouri bore the nearly 150 deadly wildfires brunt of the twisters, which in Oklahoma. Fatalities were began to spawn. At least 12 also recorded in Arkansas, people have died in that Alabama and Mississippi. state. Powerful winds in Parts of Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, Kentucky and

flood advisories. More than nesses have been either 320,000 people across the destroyed or severely damregion were without power, according tracker PowerOutageUS.

States of emergency have been declared in Arkansas, Georgia and Oklahoma. In Missouri, Governor Mike Kehoe said "the scale of North Carolina were under homes, schools, and busi- walking on walls."

aged," his statement added. A tornado killed the occupant of one residence in Butler County in the Midwestern state, leaving it "unrecognisable as a home", according to local coroner Jim Akers. "Just a debris devastation across our state field," he added. "The floor is staggering". "Hundreds of was upside down. We were

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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late) Founder Bilal Shah Afridi Chief Executive Jalil Afridi

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US launches full-scale offensive against Houthis

MERICAN President Donald Trump, who had criticised Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton for dragging the country into outside wars, seems to have changed his mind and launched a full-scale airstrike against Houthi rebels who are in occupation of parts of Yemen. According to the Pentagon, the strikes are expected to last for days. A Pentagon statement had said that the Houthis had attacked US warships 174 times, and commercial ships **145** times.

According to Houthi health ministry sources, 31 people have been killed in the strikes, and a majority of them were civilians, women and children. The attacks were launched from the aircraft carrier Harry S Truman. The United Kingdom had provided refueling facilities.

Both President Trump and Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth have made statements on their social media platforms about the strikes. It has to be noted that President Joe Biden had launched the attacks against the Houthis, but they were limited in nature, meant to degrade the offensive abilities of the Houthis. Trump has stepped up the attacks, and it is now a full-scale offensive.

In his social platform statement, Trump had warned Iran not to support the Houthis and said that the US would have to take action if Iran does not refrain from supporting Houthis, and it would not be nice. Iran had reacted strongly saying that the US cannot dictate Iran's foreign policy.

Meanwhile, the Houthis had responded to the attacks saying that they would respond to escalation by the American side with escalation. The main argument of Houthis has been that they are attacking shipping passing through the Red Sea which was connected with Israel in the wake of Israeli attacks on Gaza since October 2023.

Surprisingly, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had condemned the US attack on the Houthis, even as the US and Russian sides were preparing for strengthening ties between the two countries, and also for a telephonic conversation between Trump and Russian President Vladimir

The question is whether Trump will be able to stamp out the Houthi military capability. If the strikes fail to achieve this goal, and it is not certain that it will be able to, then Trump would have opened another battlefront in the Middle East.

It will be argued that Trump and the US had no other option but to fight the Houthis because the international shipping lanes in the Red Sea were crippled by Houthi attacks, and were posing a threat to global trade in more ways than one. This would mean that the US would be engaged in a full-scale war against the Houthis. Americans would be caught in a war abroad, which is something that Trump does not want.

This makes the complicated situation in the Middle East with the fragile situation in Gaza where Israeli attacks continue despite a ceasefire, and the Americans trying to negotiate directly with Hamas for release of American passport-holders among the hostages, those alive and those who are dead. Hamas is linking the freeing of the Americans to Israel's commitment to the ceasefire. Without intending it, Trump is being drawn into the Middle Eastern maelstrom. This makes it evident that Trump's shooting-from-the-hip-style of diplomacy does not work, that the US needs allies and it has to work along with them.

One of the ways of making things easier in the Middle East is to compel Israel to hold back and negotiate with Hamas through Qatar and Egypt. The US cannot be seen as supporting Israel wholly. It has to appear to be evenhanded. The situation of civilians in Gaza, and that of Palestinians facing attacks from West Bank occupiers, has to be on the agenda.

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The crescent of terrorism: Myths and reality

Ayesha Afgun

2001, commonly known as 9/11, not only shook the perpetrators such as mass Arabia alone took 12% of and its funding of terroris United States (US) but also shootings in the West are moulded a new geopolitical framed as actions of 'mennarrative worldwide that tally ill' individuals. The would shape the next two dichotomy in how acts of decades. Though terrorism violence are labelled based as an element existed pre- on the perpetrator's back-9/11, this one single incident became the epicentre and prejudices at the global toward which the entire level. world constructed a tale of Islamic extremism as the developments in Syria (figprincipal global peril. The ure 1) expose the role of phenomenon was more of a domino effect, spreading from the Middle East to organisations to secure con-Northern Central Asia to Southeast resources. This pattern

the spread of terrorism ed terrorism narrative to throughout the Muslim justify military expansion world post-9/11. It argues in strategic regions, includthat the bogey of terrorism ing the Middle East, that spread from Africa to Central Asia, Africa, and Southeast Asia was created Southeast Asia. primarily post-9/11. It also rounding terrorism as a geopolitical tool to leverage

so-called Islamic terrorism 'Enduring these terrorist groups are given in Figure 2. Muslims. These groups preach a self-interpreted terrorism has been hugely version of religion, which, lucrative for the Western in reality, is far from the actual teachings of Islam.

The statistics show that Martin, since 9/11, the majority of Raytheon have secured bilattacks took place in lions in profits from arms Muslim majority countries. sales and military opera-In contrast, the West wit- tions conducted under the nessed only a few and spo- pretext of fighting terrorradic occurrences, such as (2005), the Paris Attacks (2021), the US spent over (2015) and a few more. When somebody Muslin ethnicity perpetrates some violent act, it is firms and contractors. immediately labelled as Arms sales to Middle 'terrorism', implying ideo-logical intent. At the same rose under the pretext of time, similar acts by other fighting terrorism. Saudi regarding the United States ayesha.afgun@gmail.com

Moreover, the recent global powers in backing local militias and terrorist Africa and trol over land and natural reflects a broader strategy This insight highlights where the West has exploit-

well played the narrative of ment in operations like across Africa and Asia. Freedom' wrongfully linked to Islam reinforcing their dominot lost in the fact that the territories. The major termajority of the victims of rorist organisations are

The so-called spread of powers. Defence contractors such as Lockheed Boeing, ism. According to a report London Bombing by the Costs of War Project US\$8 trillion on its postwith 9/11 wars, much of which

the linkage of the arms eign policy. It has benefit-ted and still benefits from cation funded by USAID longstanding conflicts and

invasion the extraction of oil and in a rapidly changing glob lucrative contracts followpoint after the NATO-led interventions were not ulation. merely about combating terrorism but securing Afghanistan, for exam- access to strategic discusses the debate sur- ple, became not just a bat- resources, reinforcing the tleground against the economic underpinnings of Taliban but also a key site the War on Terror. The map for American geopolitical below shows the presence influence. NATO's involve- of these organisations

The Islamic world is since 2000 in securing its demonstrated the West's deeply fragmented on sec-interests in the post-Cold ability to unite under the tarian, ethnic, and ideologideeply fragmented on sec- of life: terrorism, while War order. By identifying a banner of counterterrorism cal lines. Hence it is prone largely outlived its utility as monolithic enemy in terror- while pursuing strategic to external manipulation. a unifying narrative in the ism, it created a convenient objectives. Likewise, the The West has effectively early years of the 21st cenbogeyman through which it establishment of military exploited these fissures to tury for interventions by the justified military interven- bases in Iraq, Syria, and the pursue their geopolitical tions, regime changes, and Gulf States illustrates how interests. For instance, the Sunni and Shia population. This created a power vacumoved to capitalise on the resultant chaos.

The case of Libya after NATO's intervention in 2011 is another example. Under the pretext of humanitarian intervention, Gaddafi's Muammar a fractured state overrun by militias and extremist fac-

Libya has then been targetvery strongly the economic incentives of such Western President hegemony. interventions. Trump's recent statement

Development (USAID)

global arms imports from networks raises questions 2014 through 2018, mainly about the US commitment supplied by the US. It to combating terrorism and would be simplistic to deny implies a form of indirect support. A notable example industry to the West's for- of this concern is Anwar albefore joining Al-Qaeda.
The War on Terror is less

about combating extremresource-rich countries like ism and more about main Iraq and Libya facilitated taining Western dominance other minerals. In Iraq, US al order. As terrorism oil companies secured recedes from US national security priorities, its legaing the toppling of Saddam cy remains a stark reminder Hussein, while Libya's vast of how global narratives oil reserves became a focal can be manipulated to serve powerful interests at the intervention in 2011. These expense of vulnerable pop

The Security Strategy (NSS) from 2001 to 2008 featured terrorism as its dominant theme. However, the Biden the War on Terror. The map administration's 2024 NSS shows great power competition with China and Russia as the main threat This reflects a very real fact rightly still a concern, has

In the aftermath, with 20 resource extraction while the terrorism narrative has 2003 US invasion of Iraq years of hindsight, one can maintaining global hege-mony. Though terrorism is Western military presence, Hussein's regime, which label of Islamic terrorism, was tenuously maintaining as it has arisen, is, to a great and Muslims, the irony is nance over resource-rich a balance between the extent, a construct serving the strategic interests o Western powers. It would um into which extremist not be inaccurate to say that organisations like ISIS these so-called Islamic ter rorist organisations have, at times, operated as US-led Western proxies.

The narrative was creat ed to dismantle the Muslim world and solidify the Western influence in differ ent regions. These fault regime was toppled, and lines in the Islamic world what came afterwards was conferred several economic and geopolitical benefits to many global powers and their allies in the form of Oil infrastructure in arms sales, expansion of the military-industrial comflowed to private defence ed and exploited, indicating plex, and access to key resources, thus assisting them to retain their globa

Writer can be reached a

From Kulbhushan to Jaffar Express: India's terror network exposed

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

imity makes them neigh- dead dog is pulled out of towards Pakistan since be clean, no matter how anything but like intoler- Half-hearted responses and military confrontations to not curb Indian-backed terat destabilizing Pakistan, actionable measures to dis-India has consistently mantle the networks demonstrated hostility. orchestrating such attacks. Despite numerous peace Beyond direct acts of overtures by Pakistan, terrorism, India has also India has maintained an from waterborne terrorwithin Pakistan.

serving officer of the Indian Navy, Jadhav was operating under a false identity and admitted to orchestrating terrorist activities in Pakistan. His confession before Pakistani authorities provided undeniable evidence of India's involvement in fomenting unrest in Balochistan and Karachi. The Indian government, instead of disowning him, rushed to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to

defend him, further exposing their deep engagement in espionage and terrorism against Pakistan. attack, India launched an airstrike in Balakot on February 26, 2019, claiming to have targeted terrorist camps-a claim that was

AKISTAN and ly and indirectly responsible remain pending. This plex and troubled reflects the broader issue of history, shaped by deep- global inaction when it seated animosities and comes to India's subversive conflicts. activities in Pakistan. The While geographical prox- reality is simple: unless the bors, India's attitude the well, the water will not Partition in 1947 has been many buckets are taken out. able enemy. From direct mere condemnations will covert operations aimed rorism; it requires firm,

weaponized water against aggressive stance, engag- Pakistan. As an upper riparing in activities that range ian state, India has frequently violated the Indus ism to extremism in Waters Treaty of 1960 by sports, and direct involve- constructing dams and ment in terrorist incidents altering water flows, thereby impacting Pakistan's One of the most glaring agricultural sector. Projects examples of Indian subver- like the Kishanganga and sion was the arrest of Ratle hydroelectric plants Kulbhushan Jadhay, an on the Jhelum and Chenab Indian spy who was caught rivers have raised serious in Balochistan in 2016. A concerns about India's attempts to Pakistan's water resources. This form of water aggression threatens Pakistan's economy and food security, making it an existential issue.

Even in the realm of sports, India has displayed hostility towards Pakistan. A glaring example of India's politically motivated stance in sports is its refusal to play matches in Pakistan during the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. Despite Pakistan being the official host of the tournament, India has insisted on Similarly, the case of playing its matches at a Indian Air Force pilot neutral venue, which has Abhinandan Varthaman in reportedly been agreed 2019 highlighted India's upon as Ďubai. This move reckless aggression. comes despite the fact that Following the Pulwama top cricketing nations. top cricketing nations, including England, and Australia, Zealand, have recently played in Pakistan without security concerns. India's widely debunked. The very decision is clearly a politinext day, Pakistan's Air cal maneuver rather than a Force successfully inter- genuine concern for securicepted Indian fighter jets ty. A similar scenario violating Pakistani air- unfolded during the 2023 space, leading to the cap- Asia Cup when India ture of Abhinandan. This refused to play in Pakistan,

India's involvement in supporting separatist elements in Balochistan is another area where its anti-Pakistan agenda is evident. Pakistani security agencies have repeatedly provided evidence of Indian funding and training of Baloch insurgents. In 2020, Pakistan's Foreign Minister presented a dossier containing irrefutable evidence of India's state-sponsored terrorism, including financing anti-Pakistan groups such as BLA (Balochistan Liberation Army) and BRA (Baloch Republican Army). These groups have been responsible for attacks on security forces and vital infrastructure, including the Chinese consulate in Karachi and the Gwadar Port, which is a key component of the China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor (CPEC). Another recent example is the sabotage of the Jaafar Express, a passenger train targeted by terrorists in Balochistan. Investigations pointed towards Indian-backed elements attempting to create chaos within Pakistan. The international com-

munity, including the United Nations, has condemned the kidnapping and terrorism linked to the Jaafar Express attack in clear terms, yet decisive actions against those directly and indirectly responsi-

ble remain pending. India's false narratives but also showcased Pakistan's military preparedness. The fact that Abhinandan was returned as a goodwill gesture did not soften India's hostility, proving once again that peace initiatives are often met with suspicion and aggression.

India's involvement in supporting separatist elements in Balochistan is another area where its anti-Pakistan agenda is evident. Pakistani security agencies have repeatedly provided evidence of Indian funding and training of Baloch insurgents. Pakistan's Foreign Minister presented a dossier containng irrefutable evidence of India's state-sponsored terrorism, including financing anti-Pakistan groups such (Balochistan BLA Liberation Army) and BRA (Baloch Republican Army). These groups have been responsible for attacks on security forces and vital infrastructure, including the Chinese consulate Karachi and the Gwadar Port, which is a key component of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

(CPEC). Another recent example is the sabotage of the Jaafar Express, a passenger train targeted by terrorists in Balochistan. Investigations pointed towards Indianbacked elements attempting to create chaos within Pakistan. The international community, including the United Nations, has condemned the kidnapping and terrorism linked to the Jaafar Express attack in clear terms, yet decisive ereignty actions against those direct-

incident not only exposed resulting in a hybrid model where its matches were held in Sri Lanka. By constantly avoiding playing in Pakistan, India is not only undermining the integrity of international sports but also attempting to isolate Pakistan on the global stage. These actions highlight that even in the sphere of sports, where politics should ideally take a backseat, India continues its antagonistic approach.

> Pakistan must abandon any illusions about India's intentions. It is naïve to expect goodwill or fair treatment from a country that has persistently sought to undermine Pakistan at every opportunity. While diplomatic channels and regional coopera-

Given this historical and

contemporary

tion must remain open, Pakistan's policymakers must adopt a pragmatic reinforcing approach, national security and strengthening alliances that counterbalance aggression.

A strong and self-reliant Pakistan, capable of thwarting enemy designs, is the best way to counter Indian hostility. Strengthening internal stability, bolstering defense capabilities, and continuing to expose India's malicious activities on international platforms should remain key priori-

The sooner we recognize that India is not just an unfriendly neighbor but a long-term adversary with expansionist ambitions, the better prepared we will be to safeguard Pakistan's sov-

Urgent task to protect children in conflicts

almost measure, 2024 was Children's one of the worst zones in UNICEF's histo- make change happen. ry. More than one in every six children globally now live in areas affected by face unthinkable violations.

children. Children do not start wars but they pay the highest price for them. They are more likely than adults to be killed or maimed by lose the protection and care of family members and friends. They're abducted from their homes, recruited by armed groups and sexually violated. Their schools and hospitals are destroyed, and many are denied lifewho they are or where they

From the Democratic Republic of Congo to Haiti, abduction, sexual violence to Myanmar, Sudan and and recruitment of children beyond, we cannot allow a in conflicts. generation of children to become collateral damage to unfailingly enable safe the world's unchecked wars. access to life-saving and United

Fund,

dren living in conflict can all work together to Citizens everywhere can protect children.

begin by refusing to avert our gaze from children's sufconflict, and are forced to fering, or not staying silent when attacks on children occur, just because it is too Unfortunately, 2025 does distant or the situation too not look much better for complex. We must insist that protecting children from conflicts they had no hand in triggering is the cornerstone of our shared humanity. We should support leadership bombs or weapons. They that takes decisive action to end and prevent attacks and violence against children trapped in war zones.

All warring parties where conflicts rage must act to fulfil their obligations to protect children — ending attacks that kill and injure saving aid, based simply on children or destroy their schools, hospitals and other infrastructure and services they rely on, and stopping

Warring parties must also Nations protective services and sup- all. Communities in conflict-

or plies for children. This ported to create protective UNICEF, refuses to accept includes taking action to preyears on record for chil- this deadly new normal. We vent and end attacks on humanitarian workers risking their lives to save and

Governments that have influence over warring parties should use that influence to ensure children are protected in accordance with the requirements of international law, reinforcing diplomatic efforts to prevent and end violations against children. International peace and security institutions, such as the United Nations Security Council and regional organizations, should re-engage in collective action to consistently prioritize the safety and well-being of children trapped in armed conflicts, including proactive diplo-

flicts The international community should urgently increase investment in programs to protect children impacted by conflicts, alongside investments to intensify efforts to monitor and report on violations against children and advocacy to end them once and for

matic efforts to end con-

affected areas must be sup environments for all chil dren, taking into account their vulnerabilities based on their age, gender, disability and legal status.

Action is being taken including here in China, by both the government and ordinary citizens. Last year for example, people, including children, in China raised 19.5 million yuan (\$2.7 mil lion) to support children affected by the conflict in Gaza. These funds were donated to the embassy of the State of Palestine in Beijing, which in turn donat ed them to UNICEF.

The funds are now being used to meet the urgen needs of children in Gaza ir fields such as education and child protection. This is helping many of the most vulnerable children in Gaza basic education access through temporary learning

spaces. In other words, we must all come together to protec children from the horrors of war, reverse this deadly "new normal" of attacks against children, and preserve our shared humanity. – China Daily

The world must not accept the 'new normal' in Palestine

Ramallah in the occu- rates. pied West Bank in Israeli military raids on Gaza. January, the tension was Palestinian homes and palpable. It reminded arbitrary detention have hospital attack in Gaza? have to live the same life law. me of the second become a daily occur-Intifada, which I wit- rence. Of the 10,000 nessed firsthand as a Palestinians lingering in child. There was fear Israeli prisons, more than and anxiety and an 300 are children, most of increased sense of uncer- whom face no charge and tainty due to constant have no way of knowing if the town were blocked • • • • • • by checkpoints, leading to hours-long waits and humiliation for Palestinians trying to enter or leave.

Weeks before I visited, Israeli settlers had set fire to my family's land during the olive-picking season. This followed a similar attack last summer and two more the year before, which had destroyed property, crops, and ancient olive trees.

My father told me he stood powerless, unable to extinguish the fire as the armed settlers were protected by Israeli forces. able to put out the fire and permits — has intenbecause it is diverted by sified and made daily life nearby illegal settlements. unbearable

occupied West Bank has new military checkpoints been worsening for years, and barriers have been but violence escalated installed since October 7. sharply after October 7, This has led to severe 2023. Nearly half of all movement restrictions and Palestinian children killed disruptions to essential by Israeli forces or settlers services, deepening an since records began were already dire humanitarian killed in just the past two crisis.

So far this year, that unprecedented violence has seen a two- become "routine" - and year-old shot in the head the world seems to be getby an Israeli sniper inside ting used to it. Our new her family home, and a reality includes Israeli air

THEN I returned to my home- town near ways, at unprecedented have become regular award, Palestinian film- malised because they are

occurrences, just like in maker

placed? The first fire from ther violence, home demoan Israeli air strike tearing litions and forced disthrough tents of the dis- placement. placed and burning people

Basel

Despite the film win- their

So far this year, that violence has seen a two-year-old shot in the head by an Israeli sniper inside her family home, and a 23-year-old pregnant woman killed by Israeli fire. These are not isolated incidents, but part of a broader pattern where Palestinians are killed in unprecedented ways, at unprecedented rates. Israeli military raids on Palestinian homes and arbitrary detention

have become a daily occurrence. Of the 10,000 Palestinians lingering in Israeli prisons, more than 300 are children, most of whom face no charge and have no way of knowing if or when they will see their families again. Villages are attacked, homes are demolished, and property is destroyed at accelerated rates. The architecture of occupation — checkpoints, barriers, and permits — has intensified and made daily life unbearable for Palestinians. Nearly 900

new military checkpoints and barriers have been installed since October 7.

This has led to severe movement restrictions and disruptions to essential services, deepening an already dire humanitarian crisis. What was once unprecedented has become "routine" – and the world seems to be getting used to it. Our new reality includes Israeli air strikes on refugee camps, hospitals under siege, children shot in front of their homes. Such incidents of brutal violence have become regular occurrences, just like in Gaza.

action to save the proper- at accelerated rates. The faraway land. ty, there would not have architecture of occupation been enough water avail- - checkpoints, barriers,

The situation across the Palestinians. Nearly 900

What once

Villages are attacked, become so normalised that diers and settlers on Even if the soldiers hadn't homes are demolished, they are ultimately accept- Masafer Yatta, Adra's not normal. A population been there to prevent any and property is destroyed ed as a grim reality in a community, have only brought to the brink of a

> pening in the occupied from the international West Bank. As Save the Children's

representative to the for being overwhelmed in this dynamic is reflected tality taking place for on the international stage. more than a year and a meaningful accountability to feel numb. Besides, so

killing of journalists and severing human connechumanitarian workers to tion and empathy. become perceived as "norbroader pattern where dents of brutal violence Oscar for best documen- shocking violations taking protected and valued.

intensified. There has The same is now hap- been no meaningful action community about it.

People can be forgiven United Nations, I see how the face of relentless bru-The persistent lack of half now. It's only human — allowing acts like age that has systematically bombing schools, burning dehumanised Palestinians

But governments can-

Adra being accepted by those expressed his hope that his entrusted to uphold the Remember the first infant daughter would not norms of international

The first targeting of a that he was currently liv-school sheltering the dis-ing – always fearing set-international bodies and We must demand that governments take concrete steps to hold perpetrators accountable for actions. alive? Now try to remem- ning the highest accolades includes suspending arms attacks by Israeli set- or when they will see their ber the last one. Such vio- (or perhaps because of it), transfers and supporting tlers. Roads to and from families again. ber the last one. Such vio- (or perhaps because of it), transfers and supporting the attacks by Israeli sol- mechanisms that challenge impunity for those who flout international

> The global community must act decisively to restore respect for international law. States that ignore these laws undermine the very foundation of a rules-based global order. While those who violate children's rights and international law bear ultimate responsibility, all member states of the United Nations have a duty under the Geneva Conventions to ensure adherence to these princi-

Weekly massacres are man-made famine is not normal. Air strikes on refugee camps are not normal. A two-tier system of rights based on ethnicity is not normal. Detaining, imprisoning and killing

children is not normal. The time for passive observation has passed The world must demand for Israeli forces has fos-tered a culture of impunity exposed to media cover-humanitarian efforts, and refuse to accept the unacceptable. Every delay down homes, and the and sidelined their voices, costs more lives; every delay weakens the system designed to keep people across the world safe. mal". And even when the not be forgiven for taking Only through collective spotlight is cast on no action. They have a action can we break this Palestine at global events, legal obligation to uphold cycle of violence and 23-year-old pregnant strikes on refugee camps, it seems to make no differinternational law. Its ensure a future where chilwoman killed by Israeli hospitals under siege, ence. Earlier this month, norms are not relative; dren in Palestine and fire. These are not isolated children shot in front of the Palestinian-Israeli film they are not up for negoti- Israel, regardless of their incidents, but part of a their homes. Such inci- No Other Land won the ation. The truth is that the ethnicity or religion, are

White House denies ignoring court order halting

THE White House is denying that it violated a judge's order Saturday to halt the deporof alleged Constitution.

Venezuelan gang members to El Salvador, which, if it did occur, would take legal showdowns over the administration's claims of vast presidential power closer to the edge of a constitutional crisis.

The drama surrounds Venezuelan migrants expelled with the rare use of an 18th-century law — the Alien Enemies Act another controversial decision and one that may represent overreach by President Donald Trump. US District Judge James

Boasberg temporarily blocked the deportations to consider the implications of using the act — and said in court that any planes already in the air carrying migrants should return to the US. But administration announced on Sunday that 250 deportees that it said were affiliated with the Tren

de Aragua gang were in El Salvadorian custody. A carefully worded statement by White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt on Sunday evening only deepened intrigue over whether officials defied the

The Administration did not 'refuse to comply' with a court order. The order, which had no lawful basis, was issued after terrorist (Tren de Aragua) aliens had already been removed from U.S. territory," Leavitt said.

"A single judge in a single city cannot direct the movements of an aircraft carrier full of foreign alien terrorists who were physically expelled from U.S. soil," she added.

A distinction Leavitt made about the judge's "written" order, and the fact she noted the migrants had left US soil but did not say when in the timeline they arrived in El Salvador, seem significant. Her use of the phrase "aircraft carrier" is confusing, however. And White Houses don't have the power to decree whether court orders are lawful.

As he flew back to Washington on Sunday night after a weekend in Florida, Trump defended his adminstration's actions dodged a question on whether the judge's instruc-tions had been followed.

"I can tell you this, these were bad people. That was a office with the deportations. bad group of, as I say, homhe said. But asked lated court orders he replied: You'd have to speak to the lawyers about that."

The exact timing of Boasberg's orders and how they correspond to the deportation operation is not yet clear. But if the administration defied the judge, it would potentially create the most serious legal quagmire of the administration so far and would fuel fears that an authoritarian presidency could openly defy the rule of

Attorneys from ACLU/Democracy Forward asked Boasberg in an overnight filing Monday to "seek immediate clarification" in sworn declarations, about the conduct of officials regarding his orders. They want to know whether flights migrants took off after the iudge's written or oral instructions were issued and whether flights subject to them landed or were in the air and whether those expelled were handed to a foreign country after he ordered the temporary halt.

In a separate case, a judge in Boston will hold a hearing Monday whether into Border Customs and Protection officials willfully disobeyed his order blocking the removal of a Rhode Island doctor, Reuters reported. Dr. Rasha Alawieh, 34, a Brown University assistant professor and US visa holder was deported to Lebanon after returning from a trip to visit

relatives in the country. The drama points to a trend.

Trump is wielding huge power now. This leaves those who might constrain him — including the courts and his political opponents to ask questions later, after his actions have wrought almost irrevocable change.

The invocation of the Alien Enemies Act to speed up deportations is a significant step, as it is meant to be limited to use in wartime.

Meanwhile, a crackdown on student protests highlighted by the arrest of a Palestinian green card holder is being justified on the grounds that his anti-Israel views hurt US foreign policy interests — but critics see an Amendment rights and dis-

Stephen Collinson House untamed by the

Trump's sudden shutdown of the taxpayer-funded international radio and television service Voice of America over the weekend, meanwhile, renewed debate over whether he has the power to unilaterally ignore spending authorized in laws passed by Congress and followed his chilling claims on Friday that media outlets that do not promote his

Millions of voters sent Trump to Washington to destroy institutions that they believe do not reflect their culture, values, and material interests. And polls show that among his supporters, Trump's actions are popular. His mantra is to act fast,

and illegal."

since limits on presidential power are mostly retrospective — meaning that Trump can get the desired results before he can be stopped. A government department, for example, can be dismantled beyond repair by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency

even if a judge subsequently orders fired workers, programs and funding to be restored. The 1798 Alien Enemies

Act has resulted in abuses that stained American history. It tarnished the reputation of the second president — John Adams — and was used to justify the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

The text of the law says that it can be invoked whenever a war is declared between the United States and "any foreign nation or government" or when "an Invasion or predatory incursion is perpetrated, attempted, or threatened against the territory of the United States by any foreign nation or government" and the president makes a proclamation to that effect.

But the United States is not at war with Venezuela, and while Trump has frequently claimed the country is subject to an "invasion" by undocumented migrants, criminals and gang members, Congress — not the president — has the constitutional responsibility to immediately became whether Trump went beyond the powers of the law and his

play out.

South Dakota Republican Sen. Mike Rounds told CNN's Jake Tapper on 'State of the Union' Sunday that he didn't know whether the administration had ignored the judge's order to block the deportations. But he added: "We expect the executive branch to follow the law. We have said in the past that we will follow the al republic, and we will follow those laws."

Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced on Sunday on X that over 250 "alien enemy members of Tren de Aragua" had been sent to El Salvador to be held "in their very good jails at a fair price." The US is paying \$6 The US is paying \$6 million for their accommodation.

The timing of the various court orders and the deportations is now at issue. Boasberg had initially

blocked the administration from deporting five individuals who lodged a legal challenge. After a later hearing, he broadened his action to cover all noncitizens in US custody subject to Trump's proclamation. Attorney General Pam Bondi and other top DOJ officials argued in a Sunday filing that "some gang members' were deported between Boasberg's two orders on Saturday. They said the five initial plaintiffs were not removed. The administration has already appealed the judge's moves. The case is significant

beyond the judge's instructions. International law general-

ly prohibits the deporting of they could face persecution. The brutal, crowded conditions faced by inmates in El Salvador could meet that threshold. And the government of President Navib Bukele — whom Trump officials frequently praise stands accused of constitutional and human rights abuses that infringe most understandings of American foreign policy values in

expel gang members. The or Congress to reverse.

recent decades.

administration's lack of transparency about the idensent in education by a White tities of those it deported could also raise the possibility that undocumented migrants who are not gang members are being deprived of their legal rights, swept up in the purge and sent to a grim fate in El Salvador's

custody. "Giving them this wide latitude to just ... claim that anybody is anything is wrong," Texas Democratic Rep Jasmine Crockett told Tapper. "We do have courts, we do have processes, we do MAGA views are "corrupt have laws, and we should just go ahead and use those.'

But the political benefits for Trump of acting with strongman zeal are obvious and allow him to imply that anyone who questions his actions are siding with vicious criminals who no one wants in the United States.

"Thank you to El Salvador and, in particular, President Bukele, for your understanding of this horrible situation, which was allowed to happen to the United States because of incompetent Democrat leadership," the president wrote on Truth Social on Sunday.

The administration is also facing questions over the handling of the detention of former Columbia University student Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian refugee whose green card was revoked over his involvement in the last year's protests over the İsrael-Hamas war.

Was Khalil arrested for activities that could legally be categorized as material support for a terrorist organization, or is he being held in infringement of his First Amendment rights as a legal permanent resident of the United States? His supporters say he was targeted purely for speaking up against Israel's onslaught against Gaza after the October 7 attacks in 2023.

But Rubio argued on CBS "Face the Nation" on Sunday that it was "very simple" to see that Khalil had lied when applying for a green card about his future political activities that included taking part in pro-Hamas events. should have allowed him in, in the first place. If he had told us, 'I'm going over there and I'm going over declare war. So, the question there to become the spokesperson and one of the leaders of a movement that's going to turn one of your allegedly elite colleges Boasberg's temporary upside down' — people restraining order was meant can't even go to school, whether his government vio- to create time to allow these library buildings being vancritical legal arguments to dalized — we never would have let him in," Rubio said. The secretary of state repeated his contention that Khalil's activity ran "counter to the foreign policy interest of the United States of America.'

US law states that anyone who "endorses or espouses terrorist activities or persuades others to do so" is ineligible for a visa to enter the country. But the coming law ... we are a constitution- case is likely to partly focus on whether those prohibitions apply to a legal permanent resident already in the United States.

Rubio didn't provide evidence in the interview that Khalil had committed a crime or had materially supported a terrorist group or espoused terrorism. If Khalil was merely voicing support for Hamas in a general sense— no matter how vile that might seem to many Americans — he may be regarded to be exercising his right to free speech, which is protected Constitution, and which cannot be constrained by the

government. This case has caused deep concern because it raises the possibility that any immigrant who is not a citizen could be arrested and deported if they say things that the president or his government unilaterally decide are contrary to the interests of US foreign policy.

Khalil's case is also being litigated in the courts. A federal judge has blocked his deportation, and he remains in Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody. Like the matter of the alleged Venezuelan gang members, the case seems destined to individuals to places where end up in the Supreme Court

— which will face an unprecedented flurry of cases that will define both this administration and the presidency in future.

All the cases contain this question in one form or the other: Does Trump have the vast authority that he's assigned to himself in the most aggressive attempt to wield power in the history of the modern presidency?

Then there are the con- ing for the results. He's bent cerns about why Trump is on forging deep changes to using the notorious Alien American governance, val-Enemies act at all, given that ues and culture that will be attempt to crush First other mechanisms exist to hard for any future president

The president isn't wait-

The Arab plan for Gaza has two problems: Israel and the PA

GYPT'S proposal lishment for the reconstructure worked to prevent emerged as an urgent nation. The status quo of intervention in the crisis fragmentation and division that has unfolded since between Palestinian territo-October 7, 2023. Backed ries serves their interests, by the Arab states, the keeping the goal of state-Organisation of Islamic hood perpetually out of Cooperation, and several reach. European nations, the

Netanyahu, and recently backed by United States President Donald Trump, to depopulate the Gaza

For several months, Arab states hesitated to step into the role of rebuilding and governing Gaza without a comprehensive initiative to address the core issue of Palestinian statelessness. Effectively, they were resisting being drawn into the role of a Palestinian Authority (PA) 2.0, shouldering Israel's responsibilities as an occupying force while Israelis continued their colonial expansion in the West Bank. Yet, the existential threat posed by Trump and Netanyahu's vision for Gaza has forced them into action.

At its core, Egypt's \$53bn reconstruction plan the table to prevent the ethrelies on the establishment nic cleansing of Gaza of a local steering commit-through renewed warfare tee composed of tech- and long-term deprivation. nocrats for the first six months, with a transition to mental problems that could before it is even implemented.

obstructionism

The Israeli prime minisnegotiations for

Palestinian state.

tion and adminis- any scenario that could lead

plan is not merely a Netanyahu, the Arab states **humanitarian initiative** — need the buy-in of as many geopolitical other actors as possible, manoeuvre meant to especially the Trump counter the scheme being administration, which has pushed by Israeli Prime the leverage to force the **Benjamin** Israeli premier to accept.

While Netanyahu may still seek to undermine its

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

Without a viable political tration of Gaza has to Palestinian self-determi- process, the PA has become killed, or wounded by an appendage of Israel's Israel. occupation and apartheid. enforcing security in the West Bank while lacking pact any real authority to govern as an independent entity. This has fuelled widespread

To effectively counter Palestinian disillusionment. the PA seeks to appease Abbas's grip on power has Israel and the West at the necessitated an increasingly expense of legitimacy at heavy hand, particularly home. against activists and fac-Israeli policies of ethnic cleansing.

implementation through especially glaring in the imposing bureaucratic hurpast 16 months of Israel's ship is weak, corrupt, and likely incapable of adminisdles, military escalations, or genocidal assaults on Gaza tering the Strip effectively. economic restrictions — and the West Bank. Abbas

Palestinians imprisoned,

This move, breaking a longstanding social combetween Palestinian people and their leadership, has only underscored the extent to which

Now, faced with an tions calling for a more con- urgent need for Palestinian frontational approach to governance in Gaza, the national movement by Arab states find themselves without a real, viable part-The PA's failure has been ner. The existing PA leader-

Some within the Arab •••••• Beyond Israeli resistance, there is another major barrier to implementing the Arab plan: the PA. Under President Mahmoud Abbas, it is a deeply unpopular institution, lacking political relevance after the collapse of the Oslo Accords. Over the years, Abbas has accelerated the erosion of its legitimacy by continuing security coordination with Israel, deepening his authoritarian rule, and refusing to hold elections since 2006. His leadership has been increasingly defined by

epression — of opposition factions, of political renewal, and of any resistance to Israeli aggression. Without a viable political process, the PA has become an appendage of Israel's occupation and apartheid, enforcing security in the West Bank while lacking any real authority to govern as an independent entity. This has fuelled widespread Palestinian disillusionment. Abbas's grip on power has necessitated an increasingly heavy hand, particularly against activists and factions calling for a more confrontational approach to Israeli policies of ethnic cleansing. The PA's failure has been especially glaring in the past 16 months of Israel's genocidal assaults on Gaza and the West Bank.

playbook — the Arab plan remains the best option on A PA in crisis

Beyond Israeli resist-PA control thereafter. But ance, there is another major this approach carries funda- barrier to implementing the Arab plan: the PA. Under doom the plan to failure President Mahmoud Abbas, it is a deeply unpopular institution, lacking political relevance after the collapse of the Oslo Accords.

Over the years, Abbas ter has been clear in his has accelerated the erosion opposition to any role for of its legitimacy by continuthe PA in Gaza. His stance ing security coordination is strategic: allowing the PA with Israel, deepening his to administer the territory authoritarian rule, and would open the door for refusing to hold elections geopolitical unity between since 2006. His leadership Gaza and the West Bank, a has been increasingly stepping stone to renew defined by repression — of a opposition factions, of political renewal, and of For decades, Netanyahu any resistance to Israeli and Israel's political estab- aggression.

part of a well-worn Israeli has been largely absent world, as well as from efforts to mobilise Palestinian civil society and Palestinian resistance, his the diaspora, are pushing silence and inaction reflecting his obsolescence.

has also become largely ing Israel, the US, and Arab

A political vacuum Abbas's reliance on Organization (PLO) tional donors to keep the Bank. authority afloat forces him which largely run contrary to each other.

As his domestic popularity has subsequently plummeted, his authoritarianism has become more severe.

Most recently, he initiat- in Abu Dhabi. ed a crackdown on Palestinian groups in the northern West Palestinian Bank city of Jenin and dynamics, but it would not is too late.

for new leadership. However, Abbas and his tion — or it could become His government has not loyalists have resisted any only lost the confidence of such efforts. In mid- nity. If Abbas continues to the Palestinian people but February, the PA prevented monopolise power, if the irrelevant to the broader Palestinian national confer- shell, and if Netanyahu geopolitical players, includence being held in Doha which was billed as a grass-sabotage any form of roots effort to revive the Palestinian sovereignty, Palestine Liberation Israel and the PA's interna- from leaving the West At the same time, in a

ed members of Fatah, par-Mohammed ticularly rival who has lived in exile

This moment calls for decisive

Abbas has extended an Palestinian self-determinaamnesty offer to disaffect- tion. Whether the Arab states' plan can overcome the structural obstacles in Dahlan, his UAE-backed its path remains to be seen. But if the Palestinians' leadership crisis has not Dahlan's potential return already sealed Gaza's fate, resistance could signal a shift in then now is the time for a orthern West Palestinian leadership course correction before it

eliminated financial solve the core crisis of legit support for families of imacy afflicting the PA. A political reshuffling at the top is not the same as systemic reform, and without a broader commitment to national unity and representational renewal, any new leadership structure risks inheriting the same failures that have defined Abbas's tenure.

> A moment of opportunity The reconstruction of Gaza presents an opportunity to lay the groundwork for renewed Palestinian breaking Abbas's stranglehold over Palestinian politics and jumpstarting the process of its revitalisation. If the Arab states can navigate the political minefield of Netanyahu's intransigence, Abbas's self-interest, and internal Palestinian divisions, they might be able to steer Gaza towards a more stable

autonomous future. However, if Abbas and his circle of entrenched officials remain in control, this effort could quickly devolve into another failed attempt at Palestinian reconciliation, reinforcing the status quo of Israeli dominance and Palestinian disunity.

Gaza's future hangs in the balance. This intervention by Arab states could be positive step towards Palestinian self-determinaa historic missed opportudelegates to a PLO remains a hollow continues his campaign to then the Arab plan may be dead on arrival.

action, Palestinian political renewto prioritise their demands bid to accommodate Arab al, and for an international over those of his people, government opposition, commitment to genuine



Pakistan's trade deficit declines in FY24, says Minister

Pakistan's trade deficit has International

Assembly's question hour, he said that Pakistan's trade

In December

the previous fiscal year. The minister said that USD 319 million. Pakistan's imports exceed-USD 2 billion, standing at USD 2.35 billion in Imports of auto p

Federal Minister for imports to the ongoing eco-Commerce Jam Kamal nomic recovery, with both Khan on Monday informed the Asian Development the National Assembly that Bank (ADB) and the Monetary declined from USD 27.47 Fund (IMF) revising Pakibillion in FY23 to USD stan's growth projections 24.11 billion in FY24, upward for FY25 to 3.0% attributed to decreasing and 3.2%, respectively. The imports and rising exports. uptick in imports reflects Responding to questions revived industrial activity, National with several key sectors

In December FY25, deficit slightly widened to compared to the same USD 10.4 billion in the first month in FY24, imports of two quarters of FY2024-25 power generation and trans-(July-December), com- mission equipment—such pared to USD 10.3 billion as solar panels, transformduring the same period of ers, and convertersincreased by 60%, reaching

industrial Similarly, ed USD 5 billion in machinery and equipment December 2024, reaching imports rose by 20%, while USD 5.2 billion. This imports of textile industrial increase pushed the month- machinery surged by 40%, ly trade deficit beyond indicating an expansion in

Imports of auto parts for

than doubled, registering a 109% increase.

industrial imports under- tionalization of Preferential scores the growing demand Trade Agreements (PTAs) for infrastructure and pro- with Turkiye, Uzbekistan, duction-related equipment, and Azerbaijan. Transit driven by economic expansion and improved business sentiment.

also supported rising agriculture sector have domestic demand, encourbeen signed with China. aged by declining inflation and lower interest rates. The minister emphasized

that Pakistan relies on an consultations. A proposal gy to bridge its trade FTA with China has been ous initiatives led by the with trade bodies. Reviews Ministry of Commerce had of trade agreements with contributed to narrowing Malaysia and Indonesia are the deficit and achieving in progress. The SME export targets.

heavy vehicles and trailers initiatives, including the mme is also being pursued held in Kenya, South dates, beef, and the renewal

logistics sectors. Additi- Free Trade Agreement Commerce & Industry. January 2025. International Pakistan has also initiat- onally, imports of heavy (Pak-GCC FTA) negotia- South Korea's Trade exhibitions, including the ed trade dialogue with the onally, imports of heavy (Pak-GCC FTA) negotia-This broad-based rise in Plus status, and the opera-Trade Agreements with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are also operational, while The surge in imports has 14 protocols in the food and

Finalization of the PTA with Afghanistan is underway through stakeholder Internationalization and He highlighted several Export Readiness Progra-

equipment and parts more tions, the completion of the Minister, Inkyu Cheong, has than doubled, registering a biennial review of the outlined an ambitious plan show, FoodAg, and idate and enhance Pakibiennial review of the outlined an ambitious plan Show, FoodAg, and European Union's GSP to relocate Korea's industri- TEXPO 2024, have been al base from its Northeast organized. Asian neighbors to Pakistan, following the signing of the Economic Agreement (EPA) between the two countries.

In May 2024, Pakistan and Cambodia agreed to establish a joint trade committee to enhance trade and enhance November export enhancement strate- for the expansion of the strengthened their bilateral relations by signing 15 sig-portal for monitoring. deficit. He noted that vari- finalized in consultation nificant agreements and memorandums of under- National Horticulture Polistanding (MoUs).

minister said that under the Representative are ongoing country exhibitions were Pakistani mangoes, fresh

(B2B) engagements, under Partnership government patronage, are ongoing with Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Uzbekistan, China, Belarus, and Malaysia. The "Rebranding Pakistan" initiative aims to governance investment, comprising top through digital platforms. business associations from Efforts are being made to both nations. Additionally, maximize the performance 2024, of Trade Officers through Pakistan and Belarus Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a digital

The preparation of the cy is underway. Discus-For trade promotion, the sions with the US Trade "Look Africa" policy, four to secure market access for

stan's market share post-Business-to-business Commerce, in collaboration with the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), is working to boost agricultural exports. Active collaboration with foreign missions and embassies of trading partners in Pakistan is also being pursued to explore export opportunities.

The creation of the Pakistan Land and Port Authority is underway to facilitate trade at land border crossing points. The rejuvenation of the National Trade and Transport Facilitation Committee and formulation Pakistan's Trans-shipment Ministry has drafted and

Policy are also in progress. The Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development holder input.

He attributed the rise in ports to the ongoing ecomic recovery, with both logistics sectors. Additi-Head of Research appointdriven initiatives. The Na-Brexit. The Ministry of tional Tariff Commission is actively engaged in safeguard measures to protect Pakistan's export interests in overseas markets.

Under the National Tariff Policy 2019-24, four budget exercises have been completed, with 6,500 tariff lines rationalized and 2,198 tariff lines reduced to zero duty, providing over Rs. 92 billion in relief to industry and trade.

For Budget FY24-25, ore-budget seminars were held, stakeholder consultations conducted, tariff proposals analyzed, and rationalization recommended by the Tariff Policy Board. The presented the second Tariff Policy (2025-29) for stake-

Afiniti, Finance Minister discuss AI expansion

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Global HR at Afiniti. Minister for and Revenue, discussions Senator Muhammad Afiniti's expanding busi-Aurangzeb here on Monday ness operations in Pakistan, met with a delegation from the recruitment of talent, Afiniti, a leading AI tech- and associated issues relatnology firm, to discuss the ed to the taxation structure. company's expanding busi-

Senior Vice President of

Rupee gains 05 paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 05 paisa against the and closed at Rs280.16 against the previous day's closing of Rs280.21. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs280.50 and Rs282.00, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 0.14 to close at Rs304.76 against the last day's closing of Rs303.62, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.88, whereas a decrease of 23 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs362.46 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs362.23. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal went decreased by 01 paisa each and closed t Rs76.28 and Rs74.70 respectively.

The meeting focused on regarding

Jerome Vaughan Kapelus ness operations in Pakistan. shared details about Afiniti's The meeting, held at the operations, noting that near-Finance Division, focused ly 80 percent of its operaon issues related to taxa-tional support team is based tion, talent recruitment, and in Karachi, Lahore, and the growth of the IT sector Islamabad. He highlighted in Pakistan. According to the company's growth over press release issued by the years, with its customer

Pvt Ltd, and included ly of the talent pool in Wedley Howard Fink, CFO Pakistan, particularly engiof Afiniti, Osman Asghar neers, computer scientists, Khan, MD & GM of Afiniti and technologists, express-Pakistan, and Fakhar Ejaz, ing that Afiniti's experience in recruiting high-quality human resources in the country had been exceptional. He emphasized that Afiniti was "thrilled" with the caliber of talent available in Pakistan, which has facturing sectors. contributed significantly to the company's success.

eral Petroleum Minister Ali

Pervez Malik on Monday

said that the government is

taking decisive steps to sta-

bilize energy prices and provide relief to the public

said, "Despite global eco-

nomic pressures, Pakistan's

petrol and diesel prices are

the lowest in the region

compared to India and

Bangladesh. We are com-

mitted to protecting the

public from rising interna-

He assured that every

rupee collected through the

Petroleum Development

Levy (PDL) would be used

to improve the country's

On the government's

tional energy costs.

energy supply.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Fed- engagement

as summer approaches. He the coming days.

He assured the delega-

tion that the government is enabling ecosystem for both finance ministry, the dele-gation was led by Jerome Vaughan Kapelus, CEO of Afiniti Software Solutions

He dele-base now spanning North America, Europe, and other regions globally.

Kapelus also spoke high-the use of people-processed

The delectation distribution and integrating blockchain technology and digital assets into the country's financial landscape. This technology and end-to-end digitalization. He stressed broadening the tax base, including bringing previously non-compliant sectors including bringing previously non-compliant sectors in the tax base, finance and provide a regulatory framework for emerging technologies. into the tax net. This, he explained, would provide with a reaffirmation of the greater space for sectors that are over-taxed, such as the salaried class and manu-

> the occasion, update on the government's growth and development in Aurangzeb expressed his efforts to simplify the tax Pakistan.

'Govt taking steps to stabilize energy prices'

the recent visit of the IMF

delegation was successful,

and a Staff-Level Agree-

ment (SLA) is expected in

"We are working closely

with them to align our poli-

cies while ensuring public

Addressing concerns over the Rs. 600 billion

tion would bridge the gap.

and lower consumer costs.

International

relief" he added.

revenue

growth and its continued lighted the reduction in the investment in Pakistan. He number of fields in the tax noted that information tech- return forms for the salaried nology (IT) and IT-enabled class, which is expected to services, along with agri- encourage greater participaculture, represent major tion in the tax system. The growth sectors for Pakistan, Minister mentioned that the with the unique advantage new simplified tax return that much of the input for system would be operathese sectors remains local. tional by September, ahead

of the next tax filing season. The minister also briefed committed to creating an the delegation about the launch of the Pakistan IT and agriculture to thrive. Crypto Council, a new ini-He briefed the delegation tiative aimed at regulating initiative, he explained, will help Pakistan keep pace the government's goal of with global trends in digital

The meeting concluded government's commitment to supporting businesses like Afiniti, and the importance of continued collabo-Additionally, Minister ration between the public Aurangzeb provided an and private sectors to foster

Monetary Oil Marketing Companies

shortfall, he tainable energy reforms to

expressed confidence that ensure long-term econom-

economic reforms and ris- ic growth and protect vul-

ing tax revenue from infla- nerable communities," he

plans to deregulate petrole- ed taxes would be reinvest-

um prices to foster compe- ed to strengthen the energy

tition among oil companies sector and provide tangible

Minister also mentioned revenue from energy-relat-

will soon engage with pet-

roleum dealers to address

their concerns," he added.

He highlighted the gov-

ernment's broader strategy

for an affordable electricity

supply, including targeted

subsidies for low-income

ments in renewable energy.

said. He assured that all

benefits to the public.

households and invest-

'Our focus is on sus-

Fund (IMF), he said that (OMCs) and refineries. I



Muhammad Aurangzeb to discuss business expansion, talent recruitment and taxation reforms.

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 663 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 663.42 points, a positive change of 0.57 percent, closing 116,199.59 points compared to 115,536.17 points on the last trading

A total of 507,512,741 shares were traded during the day as compared 360,456,374 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs34.105 billion against Rs21.039 billion on the last trading day. As many as 448 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 179 of them recorded gains and 211 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 58

unchanged. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs152.99 per share price, closing at Rs23,260.01, whereas the runner-up was Colgate Palmolive Limited (Pakistan) with Rs35.39 decline in its per share price

remained

companies

SCCI urges govt for early clearance of containers

F.P. Report

tion of directives with regard to expediting clearance process of stranded commercial import containers at Azakhel Dryport to ease difficulties of KP' traders and

prevent them from further financial losses. Fazal Moqeem Khan, president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, Chairman of the chamber standing committee on Dryport and executive member in a joint state-ment issued here on Monday said Prime Minister briefed about current situation of country's dryport including

various chambers. In the meeting, they said the Prime Minister directed early release of stranded commercial import con-

Azakhel dryport during

meeting with presidents of

tainers in all dryports.
Following PM's direcauthorities

Asian markets start

for release of stranded com- cials said. PESHAWAR: The Sarhad mercial import containers Chamber of Commerce and at Lahore Dryport, even industrial activities have Industry urged the federal instructed to remain open slowed down amid the progovernment, and prime min-ister to ensure implementa- Sunday, and the move high-routes. ly appreciable, they added. SCCI officials reminded

> that federal minister for Finance, Muhammad Aurangzeb, and State Minister for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik, FBR senior officials, and Collector Customs KP Khurram Naeem recently visited the chamber house and they also given assurance for early resolution of the Azakhel Dryport issues, despite that the dryport

issues were unresolved. However, they urged the government to take notice of Azakhel dryport situation wherein a large number of commercial import containers stuck for clearance, inflicting billions of that has also rupees financial losses to unemployment. traders

Traders have already faced several hardships due to the closure of Pak-Afghan border for the last 24 days that has incurred tives, the government and loss of billions of dollars to concerned both sides of the business

moved swiftly and ordered community, the SCCI offi-

They added trade and

They went on to say that KP is a war-hit province, which ground reality is totally different from other provinces and business and trade activities are rapidly

declining in the province. SCCI officials urged the government and prime minister to issue orders for the Pak-Afghan border, along with early release of stranded commercial import containers at Azakhel dryport to mitigate sufferings of KP' traders and to carry out smooth trade and business-

They highlighted the flight of capital has increased under the prevailing circumstances from KP that has also accelerated

EBM partners with SOS Children's Village Pakistan



F.P. Report

Manufacturers lish Family Strengthening their livelihoods. Program for single mothers.

children. The SOS Family KARACHI: English Biscuit Strengthening Program (EBM), aims to empower single Pakistan's leading food working mothers by pro-FMCG company, has part-viding a nurturing environ-nered with SOS Children's ment for their children Villages Pakistan to estab- while they are pursuing

EBM and Since 1977, SOS Child- Children's Village held the ren's Village Pakistan, a groundbreaking ceremony private non-profit organiza- in September 2024 at the tion, has been working SOS facility, Karachi. The towards the welfare, project is geared towards upbringing and education completion by June 2025.

Strengthening Program, EBM presented a cheque valued at Rs. 50 million to to assist women workers by

the Chairman of SOS Children's Village, reinforcing its dedication to nourishing ing flexible work arrangethe welfare and education of orphaned and abandoned children in Pakistan. In a speech on the occasion, Dr. Zeelaf Munir, of instating an inclusive

n't end at business; it nourishing lives, hearts,

extends to nourishing lives, and communities.

hearts and communities Our partnership with SOS reflects a lifelong commitment to meaningful social impact through women's empowerment, financial inclusion, and youth development. This is an extension of EBM's vision for a Pakistan where women thrive within the home and outside it with the right support system. In addition to the Family

EBM has consistently championed inclusivity through its women-centric initiatives. The company has taken significant steps facilitating their rehiring after career breaks, providments, and supporting their overall growth and development. These efforts align with EBM's broader vision Managing Director and work environment where CEO of EBM, stated, "At all employees, particularly EBM, we firmly believe women, can thrive, furtherthat our responsibility does- ing the company's goal of

week on front foot The plan looks to boost APP): Asian markets rose income with property on Monday as investors reforms, stabilise the stock

about Donald Trump's tariffs war continue to cast a shadow over trading floors.

The gains follow a much-needed rally on Wall optimism US lawmakers would pass a spending bill protected. to avert a painful government shutdown.

Eyes were on Beijing as officials were set to outline their plans to kickstart spending by the country's army of consumers after fall. years of post-Covid weakness that has been a major drag on economic growth.

The State Council amid Trump's trade war. unveiled a set of initiatives "While fiscal spendi on Sunday that aim to "progrowth by strengthening employment support in response to economic conditions", according to state news agency Xinhua.

welcomed Chinese plans to market and encourage kickstart consumption in lenders to provide more the world's number two consumption loans with economy, though worries reasonable limits, terms and interest rates. Officials were also look-

ing at raising pension benefits, establishing a childcare subsidy system, and ensur-Street that was stoked by ing workers' rights to rest and holidays are legally

The move comes after data showed consumer prices dropped into deflation in February for the first time in a year, while producer prices continued to

However, warned that leaders had a tough job ahead of them

"While fiscal spending targeting domestic demand mote reasonable wage has expanded, government support is limited," said economists at Moody's Analytics, adding that "mercurial US economic Manila policies are set to drag on healthy buying.

global trade and hit China" "With China firmly in President Donald Trump's sights, deflation concerns in China will worsen. The chaos of tariffs and rising unemployment will keep consumer spending weak, denting infla-

tion's demand drivers.

"Manufacturers have to look closer to home to sell tariff-targeted products. That combination weaker demand and more domestic supply -- will be a handbrake on

growth.' Data on Monday provided a little support, with retail sales up slightly more than expected in the first observers two months of the year, while industrial production

also topped estimates. Hong Kong gained to build on a blockbuster start to the year fuelled by a chase into Chinese tech giants, while Shanghai, Tokyo, Sydney, Singapore, Seoul, Taipei, Mumbai and

Court Notice In the court of sidra jalal civil

judge-III/ judicial Magistrate II.Matta swat. Case #.159/1. Next Hearing date 07/04/2025 Muhammad Saeed VS Umar Ahad. Notice to defendant. 3 Azad Bacha s/o Juma gul.4) Mst. Fareboon.5) Mst.Hussan Aara daughterś juma gul .6)Mst.Laiga bibi widdow juma gúl r/o Ronyal tehsil matta swat. Whereas the above named cannot be served in ordinary manner it is therefore proclaimed or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court on 07/04/2025. at 8.00 am. Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Issued today on 13/03/2025. Under my signature and seal of the court.

Court Notice In the Court of Abdul Haleem

Civil Judge V/llaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.Suit No 21/1.Institution 27/1/2025. Date of hearing. 26/3/2025. Rahim Zada VS Gu Nawab etc. Suit.Notice to No.2.Gul Nawab s/o Jalandar resident of Ghazikhanay tehsel Gadezai district Buner.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 26/3/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. enjoyed Given under my hand and seal





In brief

Afridi ruled out of National

FATA's Left-arm spinner Asif Afridi has been ruled out of the ongoing National T20 Cup 2025 with a fracture in the Zygomatic bone during a practice session at the Gaddafi stadium on Sunday evening. Asif, who was set to lead FATA in the ongoing National T20 Cup, was hit below the right eye in a freak training incident when a ball ricocheted from a pole during his side's practice session. He was taken to hospital scans, which revealed a fracture in his Zygomatic bone, resulting in his withdrawal from the tournament. The PCB medical department will continue to monitor Asif's treatment and progress, while also preparing his rehabilitation plan in consultation with concerned eye specialists.

Kohli not ready to retire

BENGALURU (Reuters): Indian batsman Virat Kohli said he may not have another tour of Australia left in him after his team's humbling 3-1 Test series defeat Down Under but the 36-year-old has ruled out retiring any-time soon as he still enjoys playing the game too much. Kohli arrested a long run of poor form with an unbeaten ton in the series opening Test in Perth in November, but frequently chased balls moving away from his stumps and managed a total of 190 runs at an average of 23.75. Speaking at the RCB Innovation Lab Indian Sports Summit on Saturday, Kohli said the slump was reminiscent of his dismal run in England in 2014 where he made 134 runs. "If you ask me the intensity of how disappointed I've recent Australia tour would be the one that's most fresh. So it might feel the most Kohli said. intense," 'For a long time, the tour of England in 2014 bothered me the most. But I can't look at it that way. I might not have an Australia tour again in four years. I don't know. You have to make peace with whatever's hap-pened in your life." Kohli quit Twenty20 internationals India's World Cup win last year but continues to play in the Indian Premier League for Royal Challengers Bengaluru. He remains a key member of India's Test team, and played a big role in their 50-overs Champions Trophy tri-

Cavs win streak halted after

umph last week.

Magic comeback **ANGELES** (AFP/APP): Banchero scored 24 points as the Orlando Magic overturned a 13point deficit to end the Cleveland Cavaliers' 16game NBA unbeaten streak with a gutsy 108-103 road victory on Sunday. Cleveland, the runaway Eastern Conference leaders, had looked poised to extend their franchise-record winning run after surging clear of Orlando early in the third quarter. But after a season where they have staged hefty winning comebacks of their own, the tables turned on Cleveland in the face of a furious burst of Orlando scoring. The Magic outscored Cleveland 35-23 in the third quarter, with Franz Wagner leading the charge with nine points and Banchero adding seven. Although Cleveland led by a slender 83-82 margin heading into the fourth quarter, and threatened to stretch away once more after Donovan Mitchell's driving layup made it 91-84, Orlando refused

to roll over. Eight more

points from Wagner in

the final frame and five apiece from Banchero

Caldwell-Pope saw the

Magic home to silence

crowd at Cleveland's

19,432

Rocket Arena.

Kentavious

sellout

T20 Cup LAHORE

(AFP/APP): Russian 17year-old Mirra Andreeva toppled world number one Aryna Sabalenka 2-6, 6-4, 6-3 on Sunday to capture her second WTA 1000 title at Indian Wells. Andreeva, who become youngest ever player to win an elite 1000 level crown with her triumph in Dubai, ended a frustrating run against the Belarusian to

> world on Monday. Andreeva shook off her Sabalenka three times in the third. In a match of swinging shifts of momentum, Andreeva was in full control by the end, giving herself a match point on Sabalenka's serve with a defensive lob that forced a miss from the number one and clinching victory with a forehand winner.

"I would like to thank myself for fighting to the end," Andreeva said. "I was running like a rabbit today because Aryna she was sending bullets and it was really hard to keep up." Andreeva claimed her first





hard court victory over Sabalenka, who had beaten ensure she will rise to a her twice already this year career-high sixth in the at Brisbane and the Australian Open.

Sabalenka had powered ping a set but it was another disappointment for the Belarusian, who stunned by Madison Keys in Australian Open title denied. Andreeva had Sabalenka under pressure early, and the youngster's frustration was convert four break points in the third game.

Sabalenka took full advantage, breaking the Russian to love for a 3-1 lead and keeping her foot firmly Sabalenka backed up her reigning number one.

some confident forays to the net, breaking Andreeva to take the opening set in 37 minutes. Sabalenka fought off another three break points to open the second set, but Andreeva finally gained a foothold with a break for 2-1 -- pouncing on a Sabalenka second serve to end a run of 18 missed break point against chances

Belarusian this year.

Andreeva followed with quick hold for 3-1 and suddenly it was Sabalenka who looked lost. Andreeva saved a pair of break points first set problems and broke into the final without drop- to push her lead to 4-2, her winners tally climbing with her confidence. After missing one chance to take the set on Sabalenka's serve, the final at Melbourne to see Andreeva sealed the set her bid for a third successive with her first love service game, complete with a pair of aces to close it.

The Russian maintained her momentum as she broke evident as she was unable to Sabalenka to love to open the third. Sabalenka promptly broke back, but that proved just a speedbump as Andreeva broke again for 2-1 and didn't face another break point on the way to on the accelerator from there. her first career win over a

Special Olympics Pakistan squad returns home with 11 Medals

KARACHI (APP): Special Olympics squad, which won 11 medals at the Special Olympics World Winter Games, has returned home.

Sports

Upon their arrival at Karachi Airport, the athletes received a warm and enthusiastic welcome from the Associate Secretary General of Pakistan Olympic Association Tehmina Asif, along with officials from Special Olympics Pakistan (SOP) and the family of the athletes. They were greeted with flower garlands in celebration of their remarkable achievement.

Gold medalists Moazzam Iqbal, Afaq Khan, Abdul Saboor, and Minahil Asim expressed their pride in representing Pakistan, stating that they participated in the games with the sole aim of winning for their country. They credited their success to their hard work, the guidance of their coaches, SOP's support, and the prayers of reached the victory stand the entire nation.

Chairperson of Special performances. She also Olympics Pakistan, Ronak acknowledged the crucial winning medals in such a dedication and excellent She added that in Turin, port in encouraging their mega event is a significant training helped the athletes the athletes not only show-children to pursue sports.

honor for Pakistan. She achieve this milestone. highlighted that the team

had been preparing for the Secretary General of POA, noted that the World Winter Games for the past five years, and the athletes Winter Games featured some of the best teams by delivering their best from around the world, yet the enthusiasm and determination of Pakistani ath-Lakhani, emphasized that role of the coaches, whose letes were extraordinary, for their unwavering sup-

cased their sporting skills Tehmina Asif, Associate but also served as ambassadors of Pakistan, spreading messages of love and peace, leaving a lasting impression on players from other countries. Tehmina Asif also congratulated the athlete's parents



Junaid Zafar dies during match in Australian extreme heat

ADELAIDE (Agencies): Junaid Zafar Khan, a Pakistan-origin club cricketer in Australia, tragically passed away after collapsing on the field during a match played in extreme heat in Adelaide.

The 40-year-old cricketer was representing Old Concordians against Prince Alfred Old Collegians at Concordia College Oval on Saturday when he suddenly fell and did not recover.

paramedics to revive him, he was pronounced dead at the scene. According to the match was played in hot tures reaching 41.7°C at the time of the incident.

According to the r

Imran Khan.

Jamal turned up for a

England

written on the

sentences for corruption Personnel

and other charges. Imran Officials

Pakistan training day during the home Test series

December last year with

underside of his floppy



games can still take place as long as certain safety measures are implemented.

Khan had spent 40 overs Despite the efforts of fielding before batting for and generous person. "It's a seven overs. Shortly after- huge loss, he was destined Australian media, the diate emergency response. Following his death, the

"We are deeply sad-

Aamir Jamal slapped with large

fine for slogan supporting Imran

KARACHI (Monitoring rallying cry among his The clause notes that Desk): Aamer Jamal, the supporters, heard at his players cannot "comment

Pakistan allrounder, has political party PTI's rallies on any sensitive, commu-

slogan showing support and not during a match be an unusually large one

for former prime minister day expressing a political for the breach, indicating

and Pakistan captain, message, it was not an that it could be setting an

mirrors that of the ICC.

code which states:

Jamal has been fined

or

4000 of PSL games last year. As political etc" matter.

ICC violation. But the example, rather than

PCB's code of conduct specifically punishing a

under clause 2.23 of that minister until he was

inappropriate comment in in May 2022. He and his

been fined over a million and even during a couple nal,

approx.) for displaying a Jamal was in training kit

number for Imran, who of its officials or sponsors

since August 2023 and is of its officers or sponsors,

popular and identifying priate comment is made.

the Adelaide Turf Cricket dened by the passing of a affecting South Australia Association, matches are valued member of the Old and other parts of the councalled off if temperatures Concordians' Cricket Club, try, with temperatures go over 42°C. However, if who tragically suffered a reaching nearly 40°C in temperatures surpass 40°C, medical episode while Sydney and Victoria.

playing on the Concordia College oval today," the club said. "Despite the best efforts of paramedics, he sadly did not survive. Thoughts and heartfelt condolences are with his family, friends, and teammates during this difficult time."

Junaid Zafar Khan moved from Pakistan to Australia in 2013 to work in the technology sector and was remembered by friends and fellow players as a kind ward, he collapsed on the for very big things in his field, prompting an imme- life," said friend and cricket teammate Hasan Anjum.

Another close friend conditions, with tempera- Old Concordians Cricket Najam Hassan, described Club released a statement Khan as a "gem of a perconfirming Khan's passing. son." The incident occurs during a severe heatwaye

racial, sectarian,

The fine is thought to

Imran was the prime

removed by a parliamen-

with the current govern-

Shahbaz Sharif. Mohsin

the prime minister.

disciplinary breach.

Khushdil penalised for breach of ICC code

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan all-rounder Khushdil Shah has been penalised for breaching ICC Code of Conduct during the first of the five-match T20I series against New Zealand. Khushdil Shah has been penalised 50% of his match fee for a Level 2 breach of the ICC Code of Conduct, said ICC prese release on Monday.

The incident occurred during the first T20I between New Zealand and Pakistan in Christchurch on 16th March (Sunday).

Khushdil was found in violation of Article 2.12 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which elates to "inappropriate physical contact with a play-Player Support Personnel, Umpire, Match Referee or any other person

(including a spectator during an International Match)." The incident happened during the 8th over of Pakistan's innings when Khushdil barged into the back of bowler Zakary Foulkes. The act was classified as 'inappropriate physical contact with

a high degree of force'

and was deemed 'reck-

less, negligent.' Khushdil accepted the sanctions levelled by the umpires and Match Referee Jeff Crowe, as a result of which there was no need for a formal hearing. Along with the fine, three demerit points have been added to Khushdil's disciplinary record, for whom it was the first offence in a 24-month

Public criticism of, or tary vote of no confidence period. If four or more demerit hat. That is the prisoner relation to the Board, any party have been at odds points are accumulated within a 24-month period, has been incarcerated or policies, the ICC or any ment of Prime Minister they are converted into suspension points. Two susfacing multiple long-term Player, Player Support Naqvi, the current chair of pension points result in a Match the PCB, is a key figure in ban from either one Test, two ODIs or two T20Is, including the current government as says the charges are polit- umpires and match refer- the interior minister and whichever comes first for ically motivated. The ees, irrespective of when by constitution, is an the player. Pakistan lost the number has become a such criticism or inappro- appointee to the PCB of first T20I by 9 wickets after they crumbled to 91-10.

McIlroy wins second Players Championship title in playoff



Ireland's Rory McIlroy to hold on to a three-shot to seal victory, cruised to a St. Patrick's lead with five holes to McIlroy's Day victory at the Players play.

Championship on Monday, defeating J.J. Spaun in a playoff at TPC Sawgrass in Florida.

The four-time major champion completed the three-hole shoot-out in one over par, while Spaun's challenge wilted after a disastrous triplebogey on the second playoff hole.

"This is the third time I've won on St. Patrick's Day, so it's been a good luck charm for me,' McIlroy said after sealing second Players pionship of his the Championship career and 28th PGA Tour title overall.

"I was lucky enough to do enough to get it done, but unbelievably proud and happy to win my second Players ... It's really nice," McIlroy added.

"I went home last night thinking 'I should have had this.' But I went home and reset, didn't have a great night's sleep, but was lucky enough to get it

done. McIlroy had finished tied at the top of the leaderboard with Spaun following Sunday's storm-

repeat of the late stumble only major missing from by McIlroy on Sunday that had allowed Spaun to force his way into the first playoff of his career.

McIlroy struck first on the opening playoff hole, the par-five 16th, crushing a 336-yard drive straight down the fairway before

reaching the green in two. Spaun meanwhile looked out of sorts from the get-go, finding the fairway rough off the tee before landing his second shot into the greenside bunker.

his 33-foot eagle putt but calmly rolled in an awkfive-footer for ward birdie.

'More complete player' Spaun, whose recovery out of the bunker left him with a long, unsuccessful birdie putt, could only par.

things got worse for of the week I would total-Spaun at the par-three ly have taken it. 17th island hole, with the American plunging his learn from this and get it tee-shot into the water done next time."

behind the green. Spaun then missed a

long 10-foot putt for double bogey and eventually finished with a triplebogey six.
While McIlroy missed

his birdie chance and a 10footer to save par, his bogey four still left him three shots clear heading to the 18th.

McIlroy's tee-shot on the last went well wide of the right fairway, but Spaun was unable to exert pressure, also going wide of the fairway.

Both players reached the green in three and missed their par putts. McIlroy coolly tapped in for bogey

McIlroy's win marked the second title of the sea-But after returning to son for the Northern the course on Monday in Irishman as he build bright, breezy conditions, towards the Masters in there was no sign of a Augusta next month -- the his collection.

McIlroy said his early season form was a reward for the hard work he has put in over the years.

"I've worked really hard -- I feel like I'm a way more complete player than I was a few years ago," McIlroy told NBC. "I feel like I can play in all conditions and anything that comes my way. Really happy that I was able to get it done today."

Spaun meanwhile was McIlroy failed to make left reflecting on a disappointing outcome.

'It's hard not to feel discouraged a little bit, but nothing but positives, Spaun said. "Putting myself in contention and giving myself a chance to win in a playoff -- if someone had told me that After that early wobble, would happen at the start

Nigeria seek WC redemption, Sudan eye history

JOHANNESBURG now Eric Chelle.

(AFP/APP): Underperforming Nigeria start to their World Cup and disadvantaged Sudan campaign, Ivory Coast-born share the spotlight ahead of Chelle admits he faces a two 2026 World Cup qualifying matchdays in Africa from Wednesday. Seeded to Zimbabwe at home this win Group C and automati- month. Blessed with outcally qualify, a Nigerian standing forwards Osimhen team boasting the past two and Lookman, the coach African Footballers of the Year Victor Osimhen and Ademola Lookman lie fifth in a six-team section.

In a qualifying competition spanning three years, the Super Eagles drew with Lesotho, Zimbabwe and South Africa, then crashed to Benin in pursuit of a seventh World Cup appearance. Since finishing 2024 Africa Cup of Nations runners-up to hosts Ivory Coast, Nigeria have had three coaches -locals Finidi George and

Fired by Mali after a poor "huge challenge", starting with Rwanda away and says "football is about scoring goals and I favour an attacking style"

with three-time World Cup reaches the halfway mark: Senegal qualifiers Benghazi as they try to reach the finals for the first time. The match is in Libya because Sudan has been Trezeguet is not sufficiently engulfed in a civil war since daunting, Ethiopia must also April 2023. The conflict has deal with recent Manchester claimed tens of thousands of City lives and uprooted more Marmoush. Salah and



Seeded fifth in Group B, Sport highlights five match- scorers in African qualifying Sudan occupy first place day five clashes as the with five goals each -ahead of a top-of-table clash African qualifying schedule Ethiopia v Egypt

As if trying to contain star Egypt forwards Mohamed and Mahmoud Salah recruit Omar Augustine Eguavoen and than 12 million people. AFP Trezeguet are the leading

between them netting all but one of the Pharaohs' 11 in Group A, which they lead by four points. Although this is a home fixture for Ethiopia, ranked 113 places below

Morocco because the east African country lacks a FIFA-approved stadium. Sudan v Senegal

Egypt, it will be staged in

Kwesi Appiah has told his Uyo with Innocent Nshuti to Gambia and at home to squad to imagine they are world superstars as they seek to stretch a two-point Group B lead over Senegal. "Look straight at the Senegalese stars and believe you are as good as they are. There is a war raging in your homeland and you are playing for your families and your country," he told them. Senegal can call on 32-

rear-old two-time African Footballer of the Year Sadio Mane, but will miss another high-profile forward, Nicolas Jackson from Chelsea, due to a hamstring injury.

Rwanda v Nigeria Nigeria may be ranked 80 places above Rwanda, but dare not underestimate the Wasps after what happened in Africa Cup of Nations qualifying last year. Rwanda forced a 0-0 draw in Kigali,

and Jimmy Mutsinzi scoring within three minutes during the second half. Chelle will not be the

only new coach on view. Rwanda did not extend the one-year contract of German Torsten Spittler and hired Algerian Adel Amrouche. Gambia v Kenya

Former South Africa star Benni McCarthy, part of the Manchester United back-

room staff when Erik ten Hag was manager, debuts as Kenya coach, vowing to due to "poor organisation" take the Harambee Stars to the World Cup. "With the right mindset and dedication from the players, and a willingness to learn and give everything they have got, we can surprise a lot of people," says the 47-year-old.

African champions Ivory Coast are set to win Group Ghana-born Sudan coach then stunned Nigeria 2-1 in F, so Kenya need wins away

second-placed Gabon to have a realistic chance of coming second and reaching play-offs. Ghana v Chad

After failing to qualify for the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations and a World Cup loss away to shock Group I leaders Comoros, Ghana coach Otto Addo cannot

afford any more setbacks. Chad are pointless, have scored just once, some stars are boycotting this match and coach Kevin Nicaise quit to be replaced by Qatari Tahir Zakaria Gardia.

So, it is hard to imagine Ghana, bolstered by Premier League trio Thomas Partey, Jordan Ayew and Antoine Semenyo, failing to secure three points before a tougher assignment



In brief

Rawalpindi Police nab 7 outlaws

RAWALPINDI (APP) The Rawalpindi Police on Monday continued the crackdown against outlaws and arrested seven accused, including three drug peddlers, two liquor suppliers and two illegal arms owners. According to the police spokesman, the Ratta Amral Police nabbed accused Suleman recovering 2.2 kg charas from him, while the City Police recovered 2.1 kg of the contraband item from accused Shah Jahan. Likewise, R A Bazar Police arrested accused Shahroz with grams charas. Similarly, the Taxila and Jatli Police caught accused Muhammad Ali and Ali Haider with a 30-bore pistol along with ammunition each. The Waris Khan and Cantt Police recovered 6 litres of liquor each from accused Safdar and Shehryar.

Wife's killer gets lifetime imprisonment

RAWALPINDI (APP) A court has sentenced an accused to lifetime imprisonment for killing his wife. According to the details the criminal Khalid Mahmood killed his wife, Late Arifeen, over a domestic dispute in the year 2018. The crime took place in an area of R.A Bazar police station. A case was registered against the criminal who was arrested by the police same year. In view of solid evidence and effective prosecution, the court sentenced the criminal to life imprisonment along with a fine of R s . 5 0 0 , 0 0 0 . Appreciating the investigating and legal teams, CPO Syed Khalid Hamdani said that sentence award to the accused involved in

Campaign against price gouging continues

serious cases is a victory of right and justice.

The Islamabad district administration's (ICT) campaign against price gouging continued for a tenth day, resulting in 170 inspections, 74 arrests and nine shops sealed. According to DC office, Assistant Commissioners and Price Control Magistrates conducted the operations throughout the city. Those arrested were found to be violating established price lists. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Memon emphasized the administration's commitment to enforcing price controls and ensuring the availability of affordable goods. He stated that there would be "no compromise" on quality or pricing. The administration is also actively monitoring supplies at Ramazan bazaars and fair price shops to ensure adequate stock for consumers. The DC's office conducting daily inspections and meetings with citizens, and a 24/7 helpline remains active

RCB conducts operation against

encroachments

for complaints.

RAWALPINDI (APP) Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) conducted massive operation against encroachments in People's Colony in Bazaar which encroaching material of 13 trucks were seized. The operation was launched on the basis of monitoring and surveil-lance of the areas. According to the details, DG (ML&C), instructed RCB for conducting anti encroachment-operation in various major bazaars of the Cantt areas. During the operation, hundreds of illegal sheds, signboards, iron fences outside shops were demol ished, footpaths and paved paths outside shops were also demolished. Operations are being conducted Under the supervision of Additional CEO Arshad

Pak, UAE discuss bilateral ties, railway development

ISLAMABAD Federal Minister for the train and took passen-Muhammad Railways Hanif Abbasi Monday met with United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador to Pakistan Ahmed Al-Tahiri and discussed bilateral cooperation, particularly in

es for his tenure, said a news release.

envoy expressed deep sorrow over and the recent terrorist attack on

gers hostage.

demned the attack and convictims and their families.

both sides acknowledged il sector. the longstanding and railway infrastructure.
Ambassador Al-Tahiri strong ties between Both the sides exp congratulated Hanif Abbasi Pakistan and the UAE. The opportunities for expanding on assuming his new role ambassador reaffirmed his and extended his best wish-country's commitment to tions, with a particular country's commitment to tions, with a particular further strengthening this focus on railway projects partnership, emphasizing and broader investment the deep-rooted friendship opportunities. They agreed mutual

through strategic partnerships with domestic and The ambassador con- international suppliers.

He reiterated Pakistan's veyed his sympathies to the commitment to fostering a business-friendly environ-During the meeting, ment and encouraged UAE investment in the country's

Both the sides explored respect to continue discussions and between the two nations. collaborate further in the the Jaffar Express in The minister highlighted rail sector and other eco-Baluchistan, where the ter-Pakistan Railways' ongoing nomic domains.

Pakistan, Bangladesh pledge to boost bilateral cooperation

Overseas Pakistanis and Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain and Adviser to the Ministry of Labour Ahmad and senior officials Employment, from both sides. Bangladesh, Brigadier General (Retd.) Dr M Sakhawat Hossain to dis-

cuss on advancing shared goals and strengthening bilateral ties. On the sidelines of the 353rd Governing Body session of the International Labour Organization Hussain, and Brigadier tional Sakhawat Hossain, said a collaboration.

press release issued here

emphasized the deep his- for collaboration in labor torical, cultural, and faith- rights, skills development, between Pakistan and a means of driving eco-Bangladesh, highlighting nomic growth.

the importance of building on this foundation to fos- scored the importance of ter closer relations. Both coordination on key sides reiterated the need regional and global issues (ILO), a meeting was held for enhanced high-level at multilateral forums. between Chaudhry Salik engagements and institu- Both parties agreed that cooperation to renewed General (Retd.) Dr M establish mutual trust and strengthen this partnership

The meeting was attend- nomic, trade, and invest-Minister for ed by Secretary Workers ment linkages, fostering Pakistanis and Welfare Fund Zulfiqar people-to-people ties Ahmed and Permanent through cultural and aca-Representative of Pakistan demic exchanges, and to the UN in Geneva Bilal promoting parliamentary and institutional interactions. Both delegations Chaudhry Salik Hussain recognized the potential connections and workforce mobility as

> The meeting also underefforts would contribute Key areas of discussion greater regional stability included expanding eco- and prosperity.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi meets UAE Ambassador, discusses bilateral cooperation and railway development projects. —APP Photo

Naqvi praises KP police for foiling terrorist attacks

(KP) Police for their swift and saved countless lives," Naqvi stated. courageous response in thwarting coordinated terrorist attacks on three police stations.

Khawarji terrorists, were successfully repelled due to the valor and quick action of the police officers.

bravery of the KP Police, acknowl- significant damage. edging their critical role in safeguarding the region against the persistent threat of terrorism. "The Police, describing them as the vanlives of citizens and upholding the enemy with valor and determina- counter any further threats.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi courage in confronting the terrorists their unwavering resolve in the batlauded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have foiled malicious plans and tle against terrorism," he remarked. According to officials, the

attacks took place late Sunday night the federal government's suppowhen heavily armed terrorists strengthening their capabilities. The incidents, carried out by attempted to storm three separate police stations in different parts of police forces engaged the assailants

(APP): Federal rule of law. Their swift action and tion. Their actions are a testament to

He further expressed solidarity with the police force and reiterated the federal government's support in

The entire nation stands behind our brave police officers. We will the province. However, the alert continue to work together to defeat the nefarious plans of Khawarji ter-In a statement issued on Monday, in intense gun battles, successfully rorists and ensure peace and stabili-Minister Naqvi commended the repelling the attacks and preventing ty in the region." The minister concluded his statement by saluting the Minister Naqvi highlighted the police personnel and extending prayers for their safety and success in future operations. Security has Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police have guard in Pakistan's fight against ter- since been heightened across the once again demonstrated their unwa- rorism. "The KP Police have always province, with law enforcement vering commitment to protecting the stood on the frontlines, facing the agencies remaining on high alert to

ASCFO screened **350,000** children in one year

RAWALPINDI (APP): The General Manager of Al-Shifa Centre for Community Ophthalmology(ASCFO), Dr. Najam, said on Monday that during the financial year 2024-25, the ASCFO screened over 350,000 children at school screening camps.

Talking to the media, he said that Al-Shifa Trust (ST) issued a compelling call for mandatory eye screenings for all children at the time of their school admission. Dr Najam stressed that the issue needs immediate attention to address the rising vision problems and early treatment was crucial to prevent vision loss rather than expensive medical interventions later.

He said that at least 50 to 60 per cent of school-going children suffer from different vision problems, however, if identified and treated early, these issues could be prevented from leading to serious eye diseases. He added that many children remain undiagnosed due to a lack of awareness, financial constraints, and limited access to eye care and early detection and improved concentration and learning ability, significantly enhancing their prospects.

Dr Najam stressed that while many organizations actively provide eye care services to children, the magnitude of the problem calls for more concerted efforts, especially with the growing number of children due to the population explosion. He said that the population of children in Pakistan was around 100 million, but current initiatives address only a small fraction of them for eye screening.

Dr Najam said that in many far-flung areas, as much as 50 per cent of the children suffer from eye problems, which was shocking as delayed intervention could lead to permanent vision loss in some cases. "In some of the remote areas, fifty to sixty percent of the children were diagnosed with eye problems, including hazy vision, congenital cataracts, and myopia." He stated that the Al-Shifa Centre for Community Ophthalmology's primary goal was to arrange school screening eye camps to assist children suffering from eye diseases and to inform them about preventive measures.

He informed that AST initiated its outreach project in 1992. Free eye camps were arranged throughout the country to assist individuals in the areas where the majority lacked the means to obtain quality healthcare.

He said that from 2013 to 2025, AST has served over 4.2 million eye patients and performed over 54 thousand surgeries. The General Manager of ASCFO emphasized that eye-related issues were rising at a concerning rate; thus, public and private entities must enhance their efforts to address this challenge. Dr Najam highlighted that many countries have successfully implemented school-based eye screening programs.



RAWALPINDI: A traffic police official lifting a wrongly parked vehicle with the help of a fork lifter at Murree Road. --APP Photo

ANF recovers over 588 kg drugs in 8 operations

Anti-Narcotics (ANF) while conducting 8 International Airport. operations across the counmore than Rs 160 million near and arrested 10 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters

arrested accused Nazimabad, Karachi.

The arrested accused er operation, 1.172 kg ice ed up. hidden in the trolley bag of

(APP): a passenger going to Doha ered from the possession of Force was recovered at Islamabad an accused netted near

460 kg ketamine was try managed to recover recovered from a container over 588 kg drugs worth imported from Germany Kolachi Road, Karachi.

51.6 kg hashish and 4.8 spokesman on Monday. kg opium were recovered near M-1 Motorway Toll He informed that 2 kg from a truck and motorcy- Plaza Islamabad, 600 hashish was recovered from cle near GT Road, the possession of an Gujranwala and 3 suspects ered from the shoes of an in were arrested during the operation.

60 kg hashish hidden in confessed to selling drugs a vehicle was seized near tered against the arrested to the students of educa- M-1 Motorway Islamabad accused under the tional institutions. In anoth- and 2 accused were round-

6 kg hashish was recov- under process.

an accused netted near Charsadda Road in North Bypass Peshawar area.

1.9 ice was recovered from the possession of a woman arrested near M-1 Motorway Islamabad.

In another operation kg opium were recovered near M-1 Motorway Toll grams hashish was recovaccused travelling in a passenger bus.

Cases have been regis-Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are

Citizens demand action against professional baggers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Citizens Monday demanded the administration of federal capital to take strict action from the pockets of innocent citizens outside Mosques.

attention during holy month of Ramazan. Riaz Alam a citizens said, "a large number of beggars of different age groups including men, women and children are seen outside Mosques particularly during Namaz

According to them, these baggers exploit the senti-

ments of worshipers as they use tactics to capture the

They later move to other points like traffic signals and streets to get attention of citizens.

Worshippers said that besides other places a large of professional beggars are present all time at Shah Faisal

"They not only create nuisance during Nimaz and Iftar tine but also a potential security threat.

Aslam Aman said, "Some worshippers have reported being harassed or intimidated by aggressive beggars, which can be distracting and disrupt their spiritual expe-

The Mosques administration and local authorities should increase security measures and implement effective strategies to deter professional begging in the area. A worshipper Sakina bibi at Shah Faisal

Mosque said "It's really annoying to see these professional beggars every time we come to pray and they are not even genuinely in need, they're just taking advantage of the mosque's charitable atmosphere.'

While sharing her experience she said "They have seen some beggars being really aggressive and harassing worshippers for money and it's not right, and something needs to be done about it.

A local Resident Adeel Hasaan said "I feel sorry for those who are genuinely in need, but these professional beggars exploit on the name of poverty which is wrong.

The authorities should do something to stop this.' He said "It's disturbing to see children being used by these professional beggars adding that It's child exploitation, and it needs to be stopped.

"I have noticed that some of these beggars are not even from this city as they come from other places just to beg here and It's a big problem, the authorities need to take

Tax incentives for green construction a must to promote sustainability: Sherry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator cularity by recycling and reusing construction industry with a tax- and green construction prac- is a major driver of the climate certification system to enhance the resilience of the construction materials, but we need formal ation roadmap that incentivizes tices," he remarked, stressing the crisis. He called upon policy- the resilience of the construction on Climate Change, stressed the policies," she stated. need for integrating construction industry concerns into national climate policies and proposed Environmental tax incentives for green contaxes on non-compliant sectors.

She was speaking at a highlevel consultative webinar, (SDPI) here on Monday, said a sector with circularity and zero-press release. In her keynote emission goals. address, Senator Sherry Rehman highlighted the solid waste crisis

of Senate's Standing Committee sector integration into national She also called for a dedicat-

force within Protection Agency (EPA) to implement struction projects and higher building codes and zero-waste strategies. Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, the Executive Director of SDPI, emphasized that this conorganized by the Sustainable sultation was a groundbreaking Development Policy Institute step in linking the construction

He said that unsustainable resource extraction and high car- the industry is currently at a cement, and clean water, all in major metropolitan areas and bon emissions were not only its severe impact on the Indus harming the environment but tiations and reforms. "Despite its river, the second most polluted also contributing to air pollution significance, the sector has river globally. "The informal such as smog. "We must align largely evaded discussions on pointed out that industrial devel-

sustainability," he concluded.

Dr Suleri said with the rapid- eco-friendly materials. ly increasing urbanization rate, the Pakistan is confronted with varimigration, poor enforcement of building codes, and a lack of in the economy, noting its past as a key employment generator.

standstill, requiring urgent nego- essential for construction. sector is already practicing cir- Pakistan's greening efforts in the climate change, sustainability, opment, including construction,

Akbar Mahmood Zaidi, Resident Engineer at ACES 18, ous challenges such as climate highlighted that globally, the construction sector contributes 30-40% of greenhouse gas emissustainable practices. The CEO sions, with Pakistan producing National Disaster Risk 25-30% of construction waste, Management Fund (NDRMF), most of which ends up in land-Bilal Anwar, emphasized the fills. He warned that Islamabad's construction sector's critical role unchecked resource extraction has led to the depletion of Margalla Hills National Park's However, he pointed out that natural reserves, including sand,

Kamil Khan Mumtaz, CEO of

need to incorporate modern, makers to decide between business-as-usual or imposing strict Zaidi, circular economy regulations.

Dr. Saeed Ahmad from NED University underscored the housing deficit, stating that Pakistan requires 10 million

housing units in urban centers. He highlighted past sustainable housing models like 'Khuda Ki Basti' and government initiatives such as the Naya Pakistan Housing Programme and the Sindh Peoples Housing for Flood Affectees (SPHF), advocating for their replication using low-

carbon construction materials. Ahad Nazir, Director of Private Sector Engagement at materials database alongside a future generations.

sector. "Without incentives, a transition to sustainability will be challenging," he noted.
UNOPS Development Sector

Specialist, Nauman Amin, pointout that infrastructure accounts for 79% of greenhouse gas emissions and 88% of climate adaptation costs. He urged policymakers to integrate sustainability into the taxation framework to drive green con-

struction initiatives. The consultation emphasized the need for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to drive a green transformation in the construction sector, making it climate-SDPI, suggested creating a used-resilient and sustainable for

Women launch campaign

KABUL (Amu TV): A group of women activists has launched a campaign titled "Let's Study" to protest the Taliban's ongoing ban on girls' education, now entering its fourth year. Women's Freedom Movement, which organized the campaign, said in a statement: "For four years, Afghan women and girls have been stripped of their rights under Taliban rule.' The group emphasized that education is a basic right, yet girls in Afghanistan remain barred from studying beyond sixth grade.

The Frontier Post

Ramazan 17, 1446 — Tuesday, March 18, 2025

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

Media restrictions raised

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Afghanistan National Journalists' Union and the Afghanistan Journalists Center have released reports ahead of National Journalists' Day, March 17, shedding light on the situation of media and journalists over the past year. These reports present a concerning picture of the restrictions, rights violations, and challenges faced by the media under the rule of the Taliban

Signing of 2nd phase of Wakhan Road contract

signing of the construction of the most important roads contract for the second in the world because it conphase of the Wakhan road nects China to Afghanistan in Badakhshan province and, through it, to Central has been warmly welcomed Asia," said Azizullah, has been warmly welcomed Asia,"

They say that building province. this road has been one of their long-standing dem- Wakhan district have also ands, and they hope that expressed hope that with with the completion of this the completion of this projproject, their difficulties ect, their lives will become will be reduced.

The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation Development signed a con-revived, and we hope it will tract last Thursday for the lead to affordability and will be a fundamental construction of the second better facilities," said road," stated Amanullah phase of the Wakhan road, Khoshbakht, a resident of extending 71 kilometers, with a budget of 143 million afghani, with a domestic company.

The initiative they have taken should be completed Faizabad, they can't even soon because it will serve reach there in a week," statas a good trade route for ed Taj Mohammad, another Afghanistan, especially for resident of the district. Badakhshan," said Mujib Hamidi, one of the residents of Badakhshan.

Badakhshan have assured an elevation of 5,000 meters above sea level.

another resident of the

Some residents of easier.

"We are 100% happy and that the Silk Road has been Wakhan district.

"If the road is built, it will be very beneficial for the people. Right now, if a patient has to travel to

Local officials

"The Wakhan road is one and emphasized its impor

'Alhamdulillah, Islamic Emirate has fully prepared for the construction of this road after signing the contract, and it will be carried out in the best way," Aminullah Tayeb, deputy governor Badakhshan.

"The Wakhan road is not only economically beneficial for Afghanistan but also for neighboring countries, and, Insha'Allah, it said road," stated Amanullah ent of Chira, the head of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in Badakhshan.

The Wakhan corridor extends from Faizabad city, the center of Badakhshan, to the Yarkand area of China, is Badakhshan, approximately 500 kilometers long and passes in through border heights at

At the meeting, discus-

The meeting neighbouring countries to avoid the abrupt and forced expulsion of refugees, to bring the services provided to refugees to positive conclusion and to coordinate efforts for the safe return of Afghans to their country through a

The international organisations were urged to work with host countries to ensure a proper process for the safe return of refugees, following a special mecha-

ous steps to address refugee issues. It has promised continued use of available resources to serve them, making every effort to ensure all Afghans live peacefully in their own country.

when reports have surfaced again regarding the forced Afghan expulsion of refugees from Iran.

sustain food distribution try of Refugees and Repatriation announced Irfan Jamal, the head of UNHCR in Afghanistan, met the acting minister, Maulvi Abdul Afghanistan's population Kabir. since the beginning of financial support for is dependent on food assis-2025, there has been diffihumanitarian projects in tance, underscoring the

> ised assistance to refugees would continue. He said the UNHCR was with Iranian working

> refugees Jamal also stressed the importance of organising trilateral and quadrilateral meetings to resolve the issues of Afghan refugees. He underlined the need for

> assistance provided by the UN to Afghan refugees was crucial and assured the aid from the UNHCR to the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) would be delivered transparently.

IEA urges global help for refugees

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has called on the United Nations, the European Union and other international institutions to pay special attention to the issue of Afghan refugees. The caretaker govern-ment also said Afghan

refugees' rights should not be trampled upon due to unjust decisions made by neighbouring countries, and that they should not suffer oppression or injustice. On the other hand, the

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says discussions are ongoing with Iran to prevent the forcible expulsion of refugees and Afghan ensure their return in an organised manner.

In a statement, the Presidential Palace said a meeting of the High Commission for Addressing Ref-ugee Issues was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister Maulvi Abdul Salam Hanafi.

sions were held on ways to better address the issues of refugees. The participants asked all committees involved in resolving refugee issues to accelerate their activities to ensure quicker services.

joint mechanism.

The commission called on the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the UN, the EU and other international bodies to pay special attention to the problems of Afghan refugees, so that their rights were not violated.

nism.

This comes at a time gram (WFP)'s country Affairs needs of many vulnerable director in Afghanistan (OCHA) has reported that individuals in Afghanistan emphasized the need for

Additionally, the Minis-

The two sides discussed ways to assist Afghan refugees and resolve their issues. Irfan Jamal prom-Additionally, the United (UNICEF) has raised

authority to prevent any disorganised repatriation of

cooperation from all sides.

Maulvi Kabir stated the community to provide children's needs, warning rity in Afghanistan, noting that the future of an entire The Coordination of that millions of people generation is at risk with-imanitarian Affairs face hunger amid the eco- out immediate action.

Uzbeks keen to invest in construction, mining sectors

KABUL (Ariana News): Uzbek investors met last week with Afghanistan's Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry, Ahmadullah Zahid, and showed an interest in the construction and mining sectors in Afghanistan. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) said in a statement after the meeting that the Uzbek delegation had been assured that Afghanistan was secure and that there are vast investment opportunities in the construction and mining sectors.

Zahid reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting both domestic neighbouring nations. This and foreign investors, comes after Uzbekistan ensuring a favorable business environment. He also said he hoped the investments would help boost Afghanistan's economy and further strengthen economic with a platform to market



opened a trade center in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif early this month.

The trade center provides Uzbek entrepreneurs million in January 2024). relations between the two their goods in Afghanistan. Investment, Industry and trade relations.

Uzbekistan and Afghanistan totalled \$153.7 million in January 2025. This is 231 percent more against the same period last year (\$46.3

Trade said last month that Uzbekistan and Afghanistan plan to increase the trade turnover to \$3 billion.

The latest development comes amid concerted efforts by both countries to The Uzbek Ministry of boost their cross-border

Kabul promotes urban culture with free books



Kabul Municipality has dis-replace them with positive tributed books, brochures, ones," stated Nematullah magazines, printed materials, and cloth bags free of of Kabul Municipality. charge to citizens.

needs in Afghanistan has

cation, food, health, nutri-

lack of funding.

financial allocations.

ensure the provision of

tion, and other related

has complicated an

already dire situation, as

humanitarian crises.

Many

activities

KABUL (TOLOnews): The cultural habits in Kabul and

Participants in the pro-Officials from the gram emphasized that municipality stated that the such cultural initiatives purpose of this initiative is to promote urban culture.

"We are trying to weaking culture.

"We are trying to weaking culture.

They also urged citizens beauty of a city.

OCHA warns budget

shortfall threatens aid efforts

In response, local offi-

KABUL (Khaama Press): (OCHA) has warned that nomic collapse.

Meanwhile,

humanitarian rising numbers of internal-

organization country's fragile health-

these services, transporta- Cross (ICRC) continues to disease.

shortages.

(ICRC) highlighted the

ters, further straining the

The International Red

provide medical assistance

but has faced operational

The World Food Prog-

displaced persons

The United Nations Office if financial resources are

for the Coordination of not secured, the basic

from January to March who rely on humanitarian

faced serious challenges. cials and humanitarian

According to the activists have repeatedly Coordination of Hum- urged the international

anitarian Affairs (OCHA), community to increase

culty in providing essen- Afghanistan to address

tion, and shelter due to a International Red Cross

delayed or disrupted (IDPs) due to ongoing

because of insufficient conflict and natural disas-

stressed the need for addi- care and infrastructure

The funding shortfall challenges due to funding

Afghanistan grapples with ram (WFP) also expressed

widespread economic and concerns over food insecu-

2025, meeting the basic aid will go unmet.

tial services such as edu- this crisis.

have been

tional financial support to systems.

to take part in keeping the

city clean.
"Such programs are very beneficial for our young generation, encouraging them to read more and adopt the habit of using cloth bags to help reduce pollution in our city," said Samim, a Kabul resident.

"It is important for us to throw our waste in trash bins to keep the city clean. Unfortunately, many young people simply throw empty bottles and trash on the said streets," Zohoor, another resident.

"Citizens must actively participate in keeping their city clean," said Wasi Gul also a Kabul resident.

Urban culture consists of a set of rules and principles that, when followed by both citizens and officials, contribute to the order and

The World Food Pro-

more international aid to

programs, especially in

urgency of the situation.

Nations Children's Fund

alarms regarding the

impact of the ongoing cri-

sis on children, especially

in terms of education and

According to reports, nearly 3.5 million children

in Afghanistan are out of

school, with many more at

The United Nations

Fund

risk of malnutrition and

(UNICEF) continues to

urge the international

funding to address these

access to healthcare.

Children's

Reports indicated that

rural areas.

nearly

Falling prices frustrate asafoetida farmers and traders in Balkh

MAZAR-I-SHARIF farmers had recently farmers in northern Balkh tivation. province have voiced deep concern over a sharp decline in the prices of asafoetida plant and resins, urging the government to assist them in finding better prices of both the plants markets for their products.

Mohammad Baqir, a farmer from Sholgara district, said he planted 50 At the same time, traders kilograms of asafoetida in the province are also seeds on his land last year, concerned about the steep purchasing each kilogram for 15,000 afghanis.

was valued at 10 afghanis, and its resin had dropped but now, several plants are sold for just one afghani," he lamented.

Farooq area of Mazar-i- between 5,000 and 30,000 Sharif, said that many afghanis, but this year, the

(Pajhwok): A number of switched to asafoetida cul-He explained some even

sold household items to invest in the crop, expecting high profits. However, this year, the

and resin fell dramatically, leaving farmers in a dire financial situation.

drop in asafoetida prices. Jan Gul Khyber, a trader, "At that time, each plant said the price of asafoetida

significantly compared to last year. "In previous years, the Similarly, Abdullah, a price of a kilogram of farmer from the Omar asafoetida resin hovered

ter market for the product. Meanwhile, Feroz Sadri, a member of the Chamber

of Commerce and Investment, attributed the price decline to overproduction in the province. According to him, India was the only major interna-

resin, with an annual demand of about 1,000 However, excessive cultivation in Afghanistan, particularly in Balkh, has

tional market for asafoetida

causing prices to plummet, he added. Akhundzada Salam Jawad, spokesperson

led to a market surplus,

price has dropped to just 3,000 afghanis," he explained, urging the government to help them find bettonnes of asafoetida worth 111 million US dollars to international markets.

He said the exports were made to Uzbekistan, Iran, India, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

According to the Balkh Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, about 500 hectares of land currently asafoetida cultivation in Sholgara, Balkh, Dehdadi, Nahr-i-Shahi, Dawlatabad, Chahar Bolak, and Chamtal

Afghanistan is one of the world's largest asafoetida producers, alongside Iran, . Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and

Muttaqi dismisses reports of internal power struggles

TV): Amid reports of divi- growing tensions between sions within the Taliban leadership, Amir Khan Muttagi, the Taliban's acting foreign minister, dismissed claims of internal Akhundzada, the Taliban's supreme leader, remains the leadership. absolute.

"There will be no bloodremarks made during a visit to Oman. "If I am a minister, I will serve. If I am not, I will not. This is not a system where a dismissed min- in Kandahar under the leadister will sulk and demand

compensation.' months. The ministry has not released any statements official. confirming his presence. unclear.

The resurfacing of

MUSCAT, Oman (Amu Haggani follows reports of the Kandahar faction, led by Akhundzada, and the Haqqani network, a powerful bloc within the Taliban. Some observers believe power struggles, insisting Haqqani has opposed that loyalty to Hibatullah Akhundzada's policies and Akhundzada's policies and has distanced himself from

While Muttaqi insists the Taliban remain unified, shed over power (within the Akhundzada appears to be Taliban)," Muttaqi said in consolidating power in consolidating power in Kandahar, the movement's traditional stronghold. A high-level security

meeting was recently held ership of Yaqub Mujahid notably His comments come as Haggani's presence, despite questions continue to swirl his role as interior minister. over the fate of Sirajuddin In Haqqani's absence, Haqqani, the Taliban's act- Akhundzada personally ing interior minister, who appointed and reassigned at has not been publicly seen least five Taliban police at the ministry for two commanders, including Kandahar's top security

According to sources who spoke to Amu TV, However, recent photo- who spoke to Amu TV, graphs circulated by Akhundzada has also Haqqani's allies show him ordered the deployment of alongside Yaqub Mujahid, a 2,000-strong special secuthe Taliban's defense min-rity force, made up of elite ister, and Anas Haqqani, his fighters from the Taliban's brother. The time and loca- intelligence and interior tion of the images remain ministry, to Kandahar and



Amu that internal divisions within the Taliban are power. increasingly becoming apparent.

The rift is clear and undeniable, especially since Haqqani's controversial trip to the UAE," Rahmani said. "He has not returned to the interior ministry since.

recent weeks, Haqqani's supporters have launched a social media campaign, circulating speeches and images that surrounding provinces.
Arif Rahmani, a former given a year ago in Khost shared clip from a speech

Afghan lawmaker, told Province warned about the dangers

"When power blinds people, disobedience follows," Haqqani said in the video. "And disobedience is an insult to faith and to the system.

A recent United Nations report also acknowledged rowing tensions within the Taliban leadership. The UN Secretary-General's latest assessment indicated that Akhundzada is actively working to consolidate his emphasize his vision for rule, holding strategic governance. One widely meetings in Kandahar and appointing loyalists to key

Kabul widow seeks support amid extreme hardships



the weight of both financial to those in dire need, like hardship and her son's dete-herself.

(Pajhwok): riorating mental health. Nikbakht, a 57-year-old As Ramadan ongoing, widow from Parwan she calls upon the Islamic province, now residing in Emirate of Afghanistan the 10th district of Kabul, (IEA) and affluent individfinds herself burdened by uals to extend their support appears far older than her vide for her children. years. The hardships of surleft her worn and weary.

though she's aged decades. Nikbakht's face reflects the her shoulders. toll of constant worry, exhaustion, and unrelenting struggle.

Dressed in a black hijab Nikbakht resides in a but those jobs were scarce shared compound with four and short-lived.

struggle for Nikbakht, who overwhelming need to promost often, she returns with mental illness since he

viving in Kabul, com- when she married, and her her children fell solely on stant source of worry.

but when business declined, she was forced to shut

spends her days and nights, some days, she may make even have those anymore."

Life has been an endless her life consumed by the as much as 50 afghanis, but Nikbakht was only 15 gling to make ends meet.

Nikbakht's woman, she now looks as raising and providing for to work, he remains a con-strain.

it down. After that, she heavy with sorrow. "He's

Her son has struggled home empty-handed, strug- was 16, and Nikbakht's heart breaks as she watches greatest him deteriorate. She cannot pounded by her son's men- family grew with two source of anguish, however, afford the medical treattal health challenges, have daughters and a son. But is her 23-year-old son, who ment he desperately needs, after the death of her hus- suffers from a severe men- and his condition only Once a hopeful, young band, the responsibility of tal health disorder. Unable exacerbates their financial

As the holy month of "If we leave him alone at Ramadan unfolds, Nikba-She once ran a bakery, home, there will be trouble kht laments the fact that her for us and for the neigh- family doesn't even have bors," she says, her voice enough flour to bake bread. We are so poor that I often with her face veiled, worked in people's homes, mentally ill. He hurts other send my children to their children. Out of necessity, I aunt's house so they don't have to chain him up. He go hungry," she says, her other families, renting a Now, she sells basic eats paper and burns his voice trembling with emosmall room for which she goods—soap, paper towels, own belongings. By God, tion. "We ask for help durpays 1,000 afghanis per and face masks—on the neighbors have given ing this blessed month, as month. It is here that she busy streets of Kabul. On him clothes, but he doesn't we are in desperate need of

Shukriya, Nikbakht's but it carries even greater her mother's side, tears fill- he says. we have never seen our 'Our mother is both our father and mother."

Like her mother, Shukriya appeals to the kindness of wealthy individuals to extend a hand to those in need, just as their family does.

Meanwhile, Shams-ur-Rahman Farotan, a religious scholar, emphacharity, particularly during

Ramadan. "Helping the poor, the

elder daughter, stands by rewards during Ramadan," ing her eyes. "Since we (PBUH) said, 'Whoever became aware of the world, provides iftar for a fasting person will receive the same father," she says softly. reward as the fasting person, without diminishing the reward of the fasting person in the slightest.' He continues by urging

> means, to assist those in need, as Allah (swt) will reward them in return for their kindness and generosity. As Ramadan continues

> everyone, according to their

the call for compassion and sizes the importance of support grows stronger, echoing through the streets of Kabul, urging those who can help to make a differneedy, and the underprivi- ence in the lives of families leged is virtuous at all times, like Nikbakht's.

US vows to keep hitting Houthis until shipping attacks stop

response to deadly US strikes the day off.

were among the victims while the Gaza's Palestinians. number of injuries rose to 98, Anees Alsbahi, the spokesperson, added on

Houthi leader Abdul Malik Al-Houthi said on Sunday that his miliits attacks on Yemen. "If they continue their aggression, we will continue the escalation," he said in a televised Houthis made their own decisions. speech. The Houthi movement's political bureau described the attacks urged Washington to cease the

The Houthis' military spokesperevidence, that the group had targeted US aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman and its warships in the Red Sea with ballistic missiles and drones in response to the US attacks. A US defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity to Reuters, dismissed the claims, saying they were not aware of any Houthi attack on the

but until then it will be unrelenting." are doing in attacking Navy ships and proved the "This is about stopping the shooting attacking global shipping." Russian into Gaza.

Stranded US

astronauts

to return to

Earth today

NEW YORK (AFP): A pair

of US astronauts stuck for

more than nine months on

the International Space

Station (ISS) will be returned to Earth on

Tuesday evening, Nasa said.

Williams are to be transport-

ed home with another

American astronaut and a

Russian cosmonaut aboard

a SpaceX Crew Dragon

craft after a replacement

crew arrived at the ISS early

on Sunday. The stranded

duo have been on the ISS

since June after the Boeing

Starliner spacecraft they

were testing on its maiden

crewed voyage suffered

propulsion issues and was

deemed unfit to fly them

on Sunday evening that it had moved forward the

ocean splashdown off the

Florida coast to approxi-

mately 5:57pm on Tuesday.

It was initially slated for no

sooner than Wednesday.

"The updated return target

continues to allow the space

station crew members time

to complete handover duties

while providing operational

flexibility ahead of less favourable weather condi-

tions expected for later in

the week," the space agency

Nasa astronaut Nick

Hague and Roscosmos cos-

Gorbunov will also return

on the Dragon capsule, with

when hatch closure prepara-

tions begin. For Wilmore

and Williams, it will mark

the end of an ordeal that has

seen them stuck for nine

months after what was

meant to have been a days-

long roundtrip.

monaut

Nasa said in a statement

anticipated

back to Earth.

astronauts'

Butch Wilmore and Suni

The United States will keep attacking to reopen freedom of navigation, called Rubio to urge an "immediate Yemen's Houthis until they end which is a core national interest of the attacks on shipping, the US defense United States, and Iran has been secretary said, as the Iran-aligned enabling the Houthis for far too political dialogue," Moscow said. group signaled it could escalate in long," he said. "They better back

The Houthis, who have taken con-The airstrikes are the biggest US trol of most of Yemen over the past military operation in the Middle East decade, said last week they would since President Donald Trump took resume attacks on Israeli ships pass-office in January. One US official told ing through the Red Sea if Israel did Reuters the campaign might continue not lift a block on aid entering Gaza. for weeks. A spokesperson for the They had launched scores of attacks Houthi-run health ministry said the on shipping after Israel's war with death toll of the US attacks has risen Hamas began in late 2023, saying to 53. Five children and two women they were acting in solidarity with

Trump also told Iran, the Houthis' main backer, to stop supporting the group immediately. He said if Iran threatened the United States, "America will hold you fully tants would target US ships in the accountable and, we won't be nice Red Sea as long as the US continues about it!" In response, Hossein Salami, the top commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, said the

"We warn our enemies that Iran will respond decisively and destruc-"war crime," while Moscow tively if they carry out their threats," he told state media. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Sunday called for "utmost son on Sunday said, without offering restraint and a cessation of all military activities" in Yemen and warned new escalation could "fuel cycles of retaliation that may further destabilize Yemen and the region, and pose grave risks to the already dire humanitarian situation in the country," his spokesperson said in a statement.

Rubio told CBS News' "Face the Nation" program: "There's no way US Defense Secretary Pete the ... Houthis would have the ability Hegseth told Fox News' "Sunday to do this kind of thing unless they Morning Futures": "The minute the had support from Iran. And so this Houthis say we'll stop shooting at was a message to Iran: don't keep on March 12, the Houthis said their your ships, we'll stop shooting at supporting them, because then you your drones. This campaign will end, will also be responsible for what they remain in effect until Israel reap-

cessation of the use of force and the importance for all sides to engage in

Most of the 31 people confirmed killed in the US strikes were women and children, said Anees Al-Asbahi, spokesperson for the Houthi-run health ministry. More than 100 were injured. The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the claims of civilian casualties. Reuters could not independently verify the claims.

Residents in Sanaa said the strikes hit a neighborhood known to host several members of the Houthi leadership. "The explosions were violent and shook the neighborhood like an earthquake. They terrified our women and children," said one of the residents, who gave his name as Abdullah Yahia.

In Sanaa, a crane and bulldozer were used to remove debris at one site and people used their bare hands to pick through the rubble. At a hospital, medics treated the injured, including children, and the bodies of several casualties were placed in a yard, wrapped in plastic sheets, Reuters footage showed. Strikes also targeted Houthi military sites in the city of Taiz, two witnesses said.

Another strike, on a power station in the town of Dahyan, led to a power cut, Al-Masirah TV reported early on Sunday. Dahyan is where Abdul Malik Al-Houthi, the enigmatic leader of the Houthis, often meets visitors. The Houthi attacks on ship-US Secretary of State Marco ping have disrupted global commerce and set the US military off on a costly campaign to intercept missiles and drones. The group suspended its campaign when Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire in Gaza in January. But threat to attack Israeli ships would proved the delivery of aid and food

CM KP directs timely control of dengue fever years, and its effective con- ventive, promotional, and

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Mini-Ali Amin Gandapur, as a timely step to effectively control the expeched out-

Dengue Action Plan 2025. ter has been sent to Chief Secretary Minister's Secretariat in dengue season. this regard.

lenges in the last several departments, outlining pre- the set objectives.

efforts by all departments. ter reads and adds that a ster Khyber Pakhtunkhwa It further says that previous month-wise framework for experiences have shown the entire year should be that when structured and developed to ensure that all coordinated efforts are anti-dengue activities, such break of dengue fever dur- made during the dormant as surveillance, vector coning the upcoming season, season, there is a marked trol, environmental manhas directed the authorities reduction in the number of agement, concerned to urgently pre- dengue cases in the peak capaigns, procurement and

The letter says that 2025 should include a that a comprehensive monidengue fever has posed detailed schedule of activitoring and reporting mechasevere public health chalties for all the relevant nism be put in place to meet

trol requires proactive curative measures," the let-

pare and implement season, adding that bulid- healthcare responses, are ing on this, its imperative to systematically executed. It On the special directives immediately develop and has further been directed in of the Chief Minister, a let- execute synchronised activ- the letter that the role for ities to ensure all necessary each department should be Khyber preventive measures are in clearly outlined in the Pakhtunkhwa by the Chief place before the peak action plan so that it coneffectively tributes Dengue Action Plan throughout the year adding

South African delegation calls on Air Chief

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A highlevel defence delegation from the Republic of South Africa, led by Dr Thobekile Gamede, Acting Secretary of Defence, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Force, at Air

Headquarters, Islamabad.

During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff reiter-Aleksandr ated PAF's commitment to South African Air Force in the journey to be broadcast live from Monday evening military to military cooperation and the training domain.

Dr Thobekile Gamede of Pakistan Air Force, highlighting its success in the domains of indigenization and cutting-edge techno- domains.



expressed desire of cooperation from PAF for modcritical equipment. The dig-aligned with the National collaborating with the nitary also conveyed an earnest interest in bolstering the existing cooperation between the Air Forces of both countries.

els, across multiple warfare through continued dialogue South and collaboration.

logical advancements. She African delegation also articulated intentions to reequip their Air Force and ernization and servicing of establish an industrial setup Aerospace Science and Technology Park being spearheaded by PAF. This visit of Acting Secretary of Defence South Africa to Air This includes coopera- Headquarters, Islamabad is commended the profession-tion for increased collabo- a testament to the strong alism and accomplishments rative efforts to revamp commitment of both training setups, ranging nations to further enhance from basic to tactical lev- their military partnership

NAB asks public to avoid any attractive inducements from Bahria Town

ISLAMABAD: National Monday again informed the public that several cases of fraud and deception against Malik Riaz Ahmed, owner of Bahria Town, and others are currently under investigation.

In a statement, the NAB said that it has filed several references against these accused persons in the accountability courts of Islamabad and Karachi, and these courts have summoned all the accused.

In these cases, the NAB said, there are allegations and irrefutable evi- citizens of Pakistan. dence against Malik Riaz and his societies without permission, and that certain individuals from Pakistan

ed to this, numerous commercial and Accountability Bureau (NAB), on residential properties of Bahria Town in Karachi, Lahore, Takht Pari, New Murree/Golf City, and Islamabad have been sealed, including multistory commercial buildings.

Additionally, hundreds of bank accounts and vehicles of Bahria Town have been frozen, and further actions in this regard are being carried out rapidly. NAB will continue its legal actions against Bahria Town Pakistan without any delay or pressure to fully protect the rights of the

Malik Riaz Ahmed, who is curassociates for illegally occupying not rently residing in Dubai as a court only government but also private absconder in the NCA case, has land in the name of Bahria Town in recently launched a new project of Karachi, Takht Pari Rawalpindi, and construction of luxury apartments New Murree, establishing housing there NAB has prima facie evidence accused to Pakistan so that such indi-

defrauding people of billions of are criminally aiding Malik Riaz rupees. It said in recent actions relat- Ahmed in this process by transferring their money to Dubai for investment in this project.

Since NAB has also strong evidence of money laundering against Malik Riaz Ahmed and his associates, these funds have been sent to foreign countries through illegal means. Any funds transferred from Pakistan for this project will be considered money laundering, and legal action will be taken against the involved elements without discrimi-

The NAB has informed that public to avoid any attractive inducements from Bahria Town and to protect their hard-earned savings. NAB, in collaboration with other government agencies, has initiated vigorous efforts to bring back the fugitive viduals can be brought to justice.



Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashra at Naval Headquarters.

Imran, Bushra Bibi moves IHC F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: PTI founder Imran Khan, along with his wife Bushra Bibi, decided to file a petition in the Islamabad High Court seeking the suspension of their penalty in the £190 million corruption case.

According to party sources, PTI's legal team prepared the petition for the suspension of the sentence. The petition argues that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) acted with malice and abused its authority, delivering a hasty verdict based on incomplete investigations. It further highlights NAB's failure to obtain the text of the agreement with the National Crime Agency (NCA), which reflects the investigative body's reluctance. Additionally, NCA officials were not included in the investigation.

The petition asserts that the prosecution failed to present substantial evidence. The petitioners assure the court of their full cooperation and pledge to attend all appeal hearings if the sentence is suspended. The petition requested the suspension of the sentence handed down on January 17 and sought the release of the petitioners on bail until the final decision on the main appeal.

Israeli airstrike kills three in Gaza

CAIRO (Reuters): An Israeli airstrike killed three Palestinian men in the Gaza medics said on Monday, and there was no sign of progress at renewed ceasefire talks. Medics said the three men were killed near Bureij camp in the cenof the devastated Palestinian enclave by a missile fired from a drone. Israel's military said one strike hit three militants in central Gaza as they were planting explosives, while another targeted several militants in Rafah.

In Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, medics said three people were wounded in another airstrike. Rafah residents have reported frequent by Israeli forces deployed in areas adjacent to the border inside the city boundaries. The persistent bloodshed underscores the fragility of a three-stage ceasefire agreement between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas mediated by Qatar, Egypt, and the

United States. Israel wants to extend the ceasefire's first phase, a proposal backed by US envoy Steve Witkoff. Hamas says it will resume freeing hostages only under the second phase that was due to begin on March 2. "Hamas has complied fully with the agreement, while the occupation (Israel) didn't comply with some clauses. It (Israel) seeks to foil the agreement and impose new conditions,' Hamas spokesperson Abdel-Latif Al-Qanoua said in Monday. Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu's office said on Saturday had been negotiators instructed to be ready to continue talks based on the mediators' response to a US proposal for the release of 11 living hostages and half of the dead captives. Hamas said on Friday it had agreed to release American-Israeli soldier Edan Alexander and four bodies of the hostages if Israel agreed to begin talks immediately on implementing the second phase of the agreement. Israel accused Hamas of waging "psychological warfare" on the families of hostages. The war began when Hamas led a cross-border raid into southern Israel on October 7. 2023, killing 1,200 people and capturing 251 hostages

according to Israeli tallies.

PHC grants bail to six suspects

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has granted bail to six suspects, including three policemen, in the Police Lines bombing case, on Monday.

PHC single-member bench of Justice Sahibzada Asadullah heard the petition. During the hearing, the suspects' lawyer argued that the accused individuals, including Fazal Khalq, Hilal, and serving police personnel, as well as Usman, who is employed at the Water and Development Power Authority (WAPDA), and two other suspects, Anayat Rahman and Abdul Saboor, were wrongly implicated in the case.

The lawyer pointed out that the main accused, Muhammad Wali, is Fazal Khalq's brother-in-law, and that the only evidence presented against the suspects was a photograph showing

sized that aside from this

the bail applications, granting relief to the six suspects. The decision marks a significant development in the case, which has been Abdul Rahman, who are under investigation for some time.

Cout seeks response in enforced disappearance cases: Acting Interior has submitted a Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice SM Attique Shah, has heard the recovery of missing individuals. During the hearing, the court issued notices to the federal and provincial governments, seeking their responses on the matter.

A petitioner, Yousuf Ali, by the next hearing.

with Muhammad informed the court that his Wali. The lawyer empha- son has been missing since September 3, 2024, and photograph, there was no despite multiple requests to arguments presented by the defense, the court approximation of the arguments arguments arguments presented by the defense, the court approximation of the arguments ar he was a student at a

Madrassa. The Deputy Attorney General Ubaidullah Anwar representing the federal government, informed the court that reports are awaitgovts ed in four missing person cases, while the Ministry of report in one case. The Additional General Nauman Mohib various petitions filed for Kakakhel representing the provincial government, stated that reports have been submitted in two cases, and responses will be filed in two new cases. The court has directed all parties to submit their reports

EU pledges 2.5b euros to Syria in donor drive

BRUSSELS: The European 300 million euros (\$328m) Union has hosted a donor drive for Syria to encourage a peaceful transition following the ousting of former leader Bashar al-Assad. Western and regional powers participated in Monday's one-day meeting in Brussels, chaired by EU foreign policy chief Kaja

Fourteen years of civil war killed hundreds of thousands of Syrians, displaced millions more, and decimated the economy. During the meeting, the EU vowed to provide about 2.5 billion euros (\$2.7bn) in aid to Syria. "Syrians need greater support, whether they are still abroad, or they decide to go home. And this is why today, the European Union is increasing its pledge for Syrians in the country and in the region to almost 2.5 billion euros for 2025 and 2026," said European Commission head Ursula

von der Leyen. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock announced that Berlin would provide an additional

for the United Nations and other organisations assisting Syrians. "There can only be a peaceful future for Syria if there is an inclusive political process," Baerbock said.

Syria's recovery. The for- minority, were killed during eign office said the funds would "help provide would Syrians with critical water, food, healthcare, and education in 2025?.

Last year's donor drive raised 7.5 billion euros (\$8.2bn) in grants and loans to help the people of Syria, but efforts to top that number are set to fall short after the United States rolled back its foreign aid budget. Meanwhile, for the first time, Syria, represented by interim Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani, attended the meeting, the ninth of its kind. Syria's new leadership is

attempting to consolidate control over territory that had been devastated and divided for more than a decade. Last Agencies

week, gunmen from the Alawite minority sect, loyal to al-Assad, launched an ambush on a Syrian security patrol that sparked the worst bloodshed since the former leader was overthrown in The United Kingdom early December. According pledged up to 160 million to a war monitor, nearly British pounds (\$208m) in 1,500 civilians, most of them humanitarian aid to support members of the Alawite

> the clashes. Meanwhile, troops exchanged fire with Lebanese soldiers and armed groups in northeast Lebanon overnight and into Monday in a new round of clashes along the border.

> The mountainous frontier has been a flashpoint in the three months since militants toppled Syria's Bashar Assad, an ally of Tehran and Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah, and installed their own institutions and army. Late on Sunday, Syria's defense ministry accused Hezbollah of crossing into Syrian territory and kidnapping and killing three members of Syria's new army.

PM chairs review meeting

(Continued from Page 1)

The meeting was briefed about the plans to enhance agricultural exports. It was told that establishment of National Agri Trade and Food Safety Authority was in the final stages. A laboratory for testing of agricultural produce in line with the European Union and international level standards was established in HEJ Research Institute of Chemistry in University of Karachi.

A National Ministerial Forum on Agriculture was formed to increase coordination between the federal and provincial governments in the agriculture sector. The draft for national policies on seeds, agriculture biotechnology and organic food was at differ-

ent stages of approval. Federal Minister National Food Security and Research Rana Tanvir Minister Hussain, Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzaib, Advisor to Prime Minister Dr Tauqir Shah, Governor State Bank Jamil Ahmed, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue Arshad Langrial and high level officials

attended the meeting.
Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called for the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders to eradicate Hepatitis C from Pakistan, acknowledging the significant support from the Aga Khan Foundation and the World Health Organization (WHO) in this initiative.

Speaking at a recognition ceremony here, marking the successful completion of the pilot project of the PM's National Hepatitis C Elimination Programme in Gilgit Baltistan, the prime minister emphasized the importance of the initiative in addressing the widespread impact of the disease in the country.

He said the hepatitis unit was initially established at the Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI) and was later expanded to other public sector hospitals, where patients were provided 100% free treatment facilities.

The prime minister expressed regret that when the new government took for office in 2018, the program discontinued. was However, he noted that shortly after assuming the office of Prime Minister, he program, resumed the which was now operational in Punjab under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

"We see a bright future of Gilgit Baltistan and subsequently other parts of the efforts of the incumbent eliminate the disease.

government, Hepatitis C will be completely erased from the country very soon. Earlier, he distributed shields among the contributors to the pilot project of Gilgit Baltistan including Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Health Minister Mustafa Kamal, Minister of State for Health Mukhtar Bharath, and Member PM Task Force on Hepatitis C Dr Saeed Akhtar.

Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, speaking on the occasion, highlighted that Pakistan ranks first in the world in terms of the number of Hepatitis C patients, which he called a matter of great concern. He further stated that the Prime Minister's Hepatitis C elimination program will not only save millions of lives but also contribute to boosting the country's economic productivity. Minister for Health Syed

Mustafa Kamal, lauding the prime minister's vision of eliminating Hepatitis C from the country, assured him of his full support to successfully eliminate the disease from the country by 2030. World Organization Representative in Pakistan Dr Lou Dapeng said the Organization will continue to stand side by side with Pakistan," he said express- Pakistan in supporting its ing the confident that with programme to completely

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